

lowlife #17

debbey richardson →





i always  
see this Guy.  
when i Go To  
The CITY-ATLANTA.

**L O W L I F E # 1 7**

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AND EVERYONE AT LASERAGE. LOWLIFE IS PUBLISHED. SIX ISSUE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE  
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AVAILABLE. COMMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND COMPLAINTS TO**

**L O W L I F E P O B 8 2 1 3  
A T L A N T A G A 3 0 3 0 6**

How did you, dear reader, spend the almost two years since your last dose of LowLife? Worrying about the war? Or the subsequent end of the world? I spent a year hanging out at Kläng, seeing a lot of really good music and wondering what is the problem with the rest of the people in this stupid world. I knew we were in trouble when Big Star changed the "Everyday Is Earth Day" bags into "We Proudly Support Our Armed Forces At Home & Overseas" It has been a while since the last issue of LowLife and the world or what's left of it or at least our ten remaining readers deserve some answers. But they aren't getting any here, just more questions. I have a problem with the very act of publishing a magazine dedicated to something as narrowly insignificant as alternative culture, much less alternative music culture.

I hardly find the time to read other people's fanzines, so I wonder why anybody should bother to read mine. I still enjoy reading *Bananafish*, *Show, Forced Exposure*, *Conflict, On Site*, *File-13*, and *Motorbooty* when they manage to squeeze out an issue, but I'm not exactly waiting anxiously. I don't even bother to read *Option* or any other slickies any more, and I'm not particularly worried about the futures of *Factsheet Five*, *Sound Choice* or *Ear*. These things are nice to have around, but there are scarier things happening in the world than the decline of the indie network. My favorite zines are the ones that have nothing to do with music, like *Nancy's Magazine* and *Kooks*.

Over the long stretch between 16 and 17 I began and abandoned a dozen different editions of these editor's introductory comments. Now the final hour is here and I find myself at a loss for anything substantial to type. A black cloud is parked over my "personal computer" and I can't see beyond the gloom. The last couple of years have hardly been a time of triumph for this loosely bound cultural entity that is supposed to be the subject matter of these pages. One minor punch in the belly after another has left me gasping. A thousand Camel unfiltered could hardly have anything to do with it. I find myself unconcerned with whether the contents of this publication relate to anything on the outside, which could account for the frequency of my byline herein. A year and a half of typewriter noodling also contributes to my garrulousness.

The Atlanta music scene that most Atlantans know about is really not too much to sing about. I have discarded the quotes that usually hover around music scene in these parts because it is something that exists whether or not I want it to exist. To the folks at WABE the Atlanta Music Scene might be a program of concerts by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. To the scantily clad fashion models and sex starved youth that attend local rock shows it is something else indeed. To yours truly, it is all of that and more and less, mostly less. Writing these gossipish scene report-style paragraphs feels a lot like doing weather reports. By the time I get around to actually printing the issue whatever it is I've written reveals itself as false, which is probably one reason why Gerald Cosloy has something similar in his magazine called "lies." People that talk about art like to say "time will tell." This is one of the big lies about history. Time erodes. Memories are foggy and in the dim light of the sunset of our history everything suddenly looks perfectly clear to our weary eyes. Nevertheless, about the only concrete thing I've done by putting out this issue and the sixteen issues that preceded it, was to create a half-assed history of something no one else would have bothered with. It is a highly subjective history, a secret underground music, a floundering scene that might not exist if somebody (Doug Deloach or Tim Seaton and/or a few others) wasn't around to make it seem real. Most of the Atlanta musicians that LowLife has always attempted to embrace are some of the least active musicians working in this city. They also happen to be the talented ones. Obviously, that's what I think. Obviously, that's not what a lot of other people think.

To almost anyone involved in the "larger" Atlanta music scene, the "LowLife bands" (thanks to C. Verene for that one) barely exist. Most

people in Atlanta probably wouldn't know many or any of the bands on the longplayer that accompanies this issue. And most of them will not find out about these bands because most of our readers live elsewhere. Only about 15% of our circulation is local. This situation doesn't bother me. In fact, it helps to inflate the myth of our little scene, even though nobody cares much about it here or elsewhere. Ron Lesard of RRRRecords thinks the new LowLife record is the worst thing he's ever put out. His initial response was to call it an embarrassment. Ron seems to be coming around at press time, but he'll never see it the way I see it. The record is an essential document of these evasive, evolving, unreliable artists. As publication approaches, these recordings are two years old and counting, but they are worth hearing. I have a sneaky feeling somebody else will agree with me. You know what time will supposedly do about this whole argument.

Back in June 1990 we had a benefit for LowLife at the (now closed) Little Five Points Pub with five musical performers. Debbey Richardson played for what turned out to be the 2nd and last time with her Ice Cream Headache lineup. Tracy Terrill (as Cake) played two songs and said afterwards she didn't want to play live anymore. Timnius played as a four piece—2 sax, guitar and keyboard—free jazz band. Murray Reams played solo and was a big hit with the crowd that (I suppose) was not used to seeing people perform "music" without any instruments. I See The Moon was nervous. We played what Dennis Palmer calls compositions. Underground press hero Bill Withers wrote and contributed to this magazine a review of that show, but he later asked me not to use it, claiming he would be embarrassed by it now. Embarrassment, seems to be rampant these days.

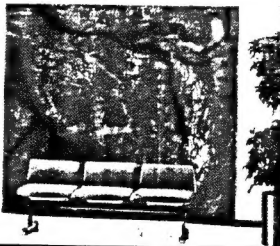
Between April of 1990 and May of 1991 Tim Seaton presented a series of weekend concerts and performances at his Little Five Points studio/performance space. From the beginning I jumped in and booked many (most actually) of these shows, and Tim pretty much gave me a free hand. This was one of the most active (and least secretive) periods ever in the history of Atlanta's secret underground scene. Some of the performers we had at Kläng include: Borbetomagus, Roger Turner, Ted Milton, All Fours, Davey Williams & LaDonna Smith, Paul Hoskin & Murray Reams, the Chaotic Arts Ensemble, Billy Taylor, Wyfe, Klimchak and Phillip Depoy, the Shaking Ray Levis, the Available Resources Band, Skits, U. Grot, Gallo, Ostrowski, & Zimmerlin, Jack Wright, Judy Dunaway and Evan Gallagher, Elliott Sharp, Timnius, Greige Travail, Man's On Control, PVC Precinct, Gandharva Consort, Ice Cream Headache, Sweet Little Candles, Cake, Chris Swartz, Geoff Dugan, Flap, Dairy Queen Empire, and Bad Boy Butch Watson. That's just (some of) the bands. We also had dance, theater, poetry, fiction-in-progress, video presentations, and various multi-media performances. Regional musicians like Wyman Brantley, Dennis Palmer, Debbey Richardson, Bob Stagner, Klimchak, Robert Cheatham, and Tim Seaton himself got to play out on a semi-regular basis. (Some people think this was not a good thing.) A recent cassette release by Davey Williams and LaDonna Smith included a live recording from their Kläng show. Recently, at a meeting of that elusive arts organization Public Domain, Tim Seaton said the problem with Kläng's first year was that 75% of the stuff we had was stupid. My recollection is more like 10%, but like I was saying, memories are funny things. I wrote at some length about my year of concert promotion in the slim, first issue of Public Domain's newsletter, *Noise*, thus incurring the wrath of at least one Public Domain member. According to Judy Knopf Rushin my "little tantrum..." basically told my "potential audience to take a hike." Also, "I won't get people" to come to these shows "by telling them that they're stupid—unless they are." The way I figure it, most people are stupid. For example, I'm so stupid, I didn't realize I was telling anybody to take a hike. Looking back at the offending paragraphs I see that I was, but I hardly feel like taking anything back. Anybody stupid enough to miss all our great shows at Kläng is someone I have very little use for. Since May shows at Kläng have been few and far between, although the Thursday

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night *Working Papers* series has been quite a success. Upcoming at Kläng on November 24: an appearance by David Greenberger of *Duplex Planet* magazine.

Meanwhile, Atlanta's secret underground continues to hobble along. That great, much hated, much ignored Atlanta band, Freedom Puff is something I talk about in the past tense these days, even if Benjamin (and Debby in her interview elsewhere in these pages) says they never broke up. The two songs on the LowLife Longplayer sound like their final gasp, and it is rather different from anything else they ever did. Since then Debby Richardson has gone on to lots of other things. Currently she is making a name for herself in the not-so-secret Atlanta rock scene with her longhair, big-guitar band Magic Bone. The current lineup is Damon Moore (guitar), David Moore (drums), and, believe it, Tim Seaton (bass—it used to be Witt Mills). And Debby sings, screams, rips her throat out and bears her bloody, stained insides for the lost cause of rock 'n' roll. I might call it a new transgression, if I wanted to wrap beautifully, horrible real-time experiences into a web of theory. I don't want to do that, but I would like to convey how this seemingly same-old thing is shining and new and good. Debby says this rock n roll shit is for the birds, but the truth is this rock n roll shit is for Debby. For more details on all of this read the interview elsewhere this issue.

Benjamin (formerly of Eastern Stars, Treat Me Seth, Blade Emotion, Medicine Suite, Freedom Puff, et al.) long since discarded the robes of underground notoriety for the superstar drag of his Opal Foxx Quartet, 10-piece band that opened for Tiny Tim at the Variety Playhouse, played at the New Music Seminar in NYC this year and has captured the affections of Michael fucking mega-mass-media star Stipe. I would not joke around about something like this. Too bad all of this has not rewarded Benjamin with all the fortune that is supposed to go along with fame.

Tracy Terrill has not been playing out since that fateful night at the Pub in June. Nevertheless, she has continued to write and record new material with various folks (Chris Verene, Bill Taft, Jeff Wilson) and will shortly release a new Cake cassette on the Bangaway label. For more dirt, check out her long overdue interview elsewhere in this issue.

Robert Cheatham's longtime project, Tinnitis is in official semi-retirement, after a very busy year of performing regularly at Kläng, including two elaborate amusical theatrical performance pieces (*Times Up Jerk/Suck* and *Theatre of Displace Organs*). Their last show was at 7 Stages at the Little Beirut Festival. They were the last act (as usual). About eight people were watching when Ellen and I walked in on their final putter, shutting down because Tim blew something out. (As usual.) Robert has turned his attention to *Working Papers*, a Thursday night bi-weekly lecture/spoken-word series at Kläng, where people like Glenn Harper, Angel Medina and John Johnston discuss topics like "Is performance art a genre and/or is art criticism art?" Robert has also been working on the Public Domain newsletter/journal *Noise/Perforations*, the third and latest issue is a 60+ page monster with accompanying Mac disc and essays/articles by Alan Sondheim, Richard Gess, Chae Prince, Tyler Stallings, etc. (Write to: Robert Cheatham at 522 Harold Ave. N.E., Atlanta, Ga., 30307 or Chae Prince, 701 Sunnybrook Dr., Decatur, Ga., 30033.) More big theatrical pieces are in the planning stage, but jobless artbum Robert is without a budget.

Richard Gess has participated in several works-in-progress readings with Dea Anne Martin, including a recent presentation at *Working Papers* and has played drums with Dairy Queen Empire. Most recently (including a night at the September Kläng Koffee House) he played a couple shows with an unnamed jazzy, improv outfit with Wyman Brantley (clarinet/sax), David Highsmith (clarinet), and Flapman. Andy Hopkins (guitar). On their Destroy All Music radio gig (without David) Andy and Richard switched instruments.

Dairy Queen Empire is doing more than ever. Over the last year or so they've played at the Point, Kläng, Tortillas, the Downstairs in Athens, live on WREK, an in-store show at Tower Records, and elsewhere. These days the lineup is Grace Braun, Chris Verene, Marty Matheson, and Justin Hughes. Their tape, *N is For Knowledge* is one of the biggest selling underground cassettes I know about. Chris has seized control of the Bangaway label, while Zak Sitter wastes his life away on a college education at Harvard. A DQE 7" is currently in the works. Their recent,



disaster ridden gig at the Point with Big Fish Ensemble sounded ok to us. Grace Braun is the country blues punk pop rock singer/songwriter chanteuse to watch in '91/92.

Murray Reams has been travelling all over the place playing with Eugene Chadbourne, including shows in Europe and NYC. He is currently at work on putting out a CD compilation with great noisy/improv folks like LaDonna Smith, the Shaking Ray Lewis, Eugene Chadbourne, etc.

While we're on the subject of the (folksie singalong) folks on the LowLife Longplayer, I might as well say a few words about my own band, I See The Moon. We originally got together for the sole purpose of recording a couple of songs for this record. The lineup represented here (Meg Fox, Marc Moore, Sheila Doyle, Ian Mykel, Ellen McGrail, and me) is only one of about ten formations we went through, before our recent breakup. The final lineup that never played out was Witt Mills (bass/vocals), Wyrn Muse (drums/vocals), Ellen McGrail (bass/vocals), and me. Over the past year or so we played a remarkable number of shows considering what we sounded like. We opened for Dirt, Opal Foxx Quartet, Homemade Sister (or Swell or Magnapop or whatever they are calling themselves these days), Dairy Queen Empire, The Shaking Ray Lewis 1957 Rock Act and Railroad Jerk. Our favorite show was opening for Big Fish Ensemble at the excremental Tunnelvision, where a club employee put a note on Marc's amp during our fourth song that said "last song."

There are a lot of other things worth mentioning. Meg Fox is singing with a new band called The Book Of The City Of Ladies that has Ellen McGrail on bass, Tony Gordon on drums, and Coby Boyd on guitar. And sometimes Sheila Doyle on violin. They have played out twice. In September at the 800 East, *Escape Velocity* show and Novem-

ber 2nd at this year's Mattress Factory. This is a rather different direction (more melodic, almost jazzy) for Meg and Ellen from the ugly, lumbering approach of I See The Moon, though they certainly have their ugly, lumbering moments like the funny rendition of ex-Moon song "Manslaughter." Their nice neat sound is due in large part to the absence of the horrible guitar duo that was the thorn in the side of most all variations of I See The Moon. Their high quality is due in large part to great drumming, something that other band never really had. They do a very different "Sommabulst Waltz" from the one featured on the LowLife Longplayer, and when I saw them they even did the oft-requested Skymrd tune "Free Bird."

PVC Precinct bossman John Laubach moved to Europe leaving behind a pile of tapes. Co-conspirator Andy Pierce occupied himself the last year and a half putting together the excellent *Mighty Risen Plea* compilation which features a lot of regional music, including Bruce Hampton and Ricky Keller, the Shaking Ray Levis, Accidents of Culture, Murray Rears, Nerve Clinic, Dick Robinson, Tinnits, PVC Precinct, and I See The Moon. And international superstars: Jarboe, Fred Frith, Crippled Hippo, Mofungo, Moe Tucker, Logos, Borbetomagus, etc. Profits from the double L.P. extravaganza go to fight AIDS. Write to Sacred Frame, 1747 Jericho Ct., Tucker, Ga., 30084.

The Shaking Ray Levis Society has been very active for the last two years putting on numerous concerts in Chattanooga with an amazing array of performers. Most recently they brought Shanker, New Winds, and the Eithor Orchestra. These Levis were also responsible for many of our connections to the great musicians at Kläng for a year. For the time being the Society will not be putting on concerts, while they concentrate on their own music, and make plans for the huge festival coming up in



Dennis Palmer and Zeena Parkins  
photo by E. McGrail

fall '92. "Shaking" Dennis Palmer and Bob "Ray" Stagner played in Atlanta almost as much as I would like them to over the past couple of years, together and in ever-changing duos, trios and quartets with other improvisors like Roger Turner and John Jasnock and Linda Lee Welsh and more. Currently they are at work on a recording for Incus records, and have plans for a southern tour with Tom Cora in February or

March of '92 that will hopefully bring them through town. We also hope to get the big Shaking Ray Levis 1957 Rock Act (with Dennis, Bob, Terry Fugate, Phil Prouty, and little Kenny Palmer) back down to Atlanta soon, perhaps in conjunction with Davey Williams' likewise rockin' OK Name.

Just about the only new free improvisation out of Atlanta has been coming from Wyman Brantley and David Highsmith, whose ever-changing group formations (Gandharva Consort, Zen Bones, etc.) have been a staple at Kläng. Wyman and David also played in Atlanta and Chattanooga in spontaneous combos with folks like Terry Fugate, Dennis Palmer, Bob Stagner, Paul Hoskin, and Jack Wright. Recently they've performed in town with Richard Gess, Andy Hopkins (of Flap), and Dugan Trod-glen. Wyman has an incredible new solo tape called

*between breaths* recorded by Tim Seaton at Kläng. Write Wyman Brantley at 206 Rimington Ln. Decatur, Ga., 30030.

While the action slowed at Kläng this summer and fall, things really picked up, down the street at 800 East. Perched on the edge of the presidential parkway scar, 800 East has a very urban/rural atmosphere that is unique to Atlanta. The space is organized under a seemingly loose knit collective, with large theme shows once or twice a month, falling just below DAM fest or Mattress Factory as far as attendance and mass. Our favorite was the *Naked People* show, with all nude art and a handful of real live nudist. The best of these was a trimmed down version of the Opal Foxx Quartet where (all-nude) Benjamin sang a Tracy Terrill song and performed a right-on version of Freedom Puff's "Paper Bag." A naked woman sitting on a couch was passing out questionnaires asking things like: "When do you feel most naked, not including when you have your clothes off." Joe Cho's *Escape Velocity* show included a trampoline that everyone was invited to use. These shows always have lots of local art, performance, poetry, and music, and there is usually something worth seeing/hearing/doing etc.

On the rock music front, once you get past Magic Bone things begin to look bleak pretty quick. Dirt is still around, bigger and dirtier than ever. They have taken up with David T. Lindsay's Worry Bird label and put out two nasty seven inchers. Any minute now they are going to turn into bigtime rockstars, and then we'll probably never see them again. Future Worry Bird releases include a Dirt L.P. and a Magic Bone single. I really like Snatch a dirty-assed quartet that was still not signed to Worry Bird the last time I checked. Snatch shares a drummer with Bad Egg Salad a band that has been around for ages and I've seen them a total of once. They have a pretty cool sound especially if they ditched the vocalist. King Kill 33" is Mitch and Keith of Man's On Control with Donna and Fletcher. This is a much more straight ahead rock than Man's On Control with Mitch going carefully out of control over loud hard music and a fancy film and light show by a fifth guy whose name I can't remember. (I couldn't find the old Creative *Loafing* Amy Bonestell interview/feature with all their first and last names.) Going out to clubs to see bands is a painful thing with every bar in town managed in roughly the same way as your typical Central American dictatorship. Two bars I really do like are the Austin Avenue Buffe (where you can check out the soulful tunes of Slim Chance on a semi-regular basis) and the Clermont Lounge (with great Thursday bachelorettes) and Atlanta's most beautiful live dancers. Other venues around town are best avoided at all costs.

A quick contests for ya before I go: be the first to tell me the names of the seven acts that played at the 1980 First Atlanta Underground Music Festival at the Little Five Points Pub and how many musicians that performed that night have major label recording contracts now and win a copy of the Tinnits *Forgetting* cassette. What a deal! My apologies to anybody who has had to wait or is still waiting for something they ordered from LowLife. It's been a strange, vacant, hurried time for me, but the last thing I want to do is rip anybody off. If you believe that, you can write for a copy of our free catalogue of stuff for sale. This issue is only a selection of stuff I have collected and written since #16. Some things in this issue are a year old or older. Some things were written the week before it came out. Readers can try to figure out what is what, and do with it what you will. It's not like it is going to make the world a better place or anything. —G.T.



# EVERYTHING'S COMING UP



*Sunny reasons to survive the winter season*

## **PETER JEFFERIES:**

**The Last Great Challenge in a Dull World LP/CD**

As a member of NZ legends Nocturnal Projections and This Kind of Punishment, and more recently Pagal Grind and Cyclops, Peter Jefferies has carved out a niche in the music world with decidedly personal underpinnings. **The Last Great Challenge in a Dull World**, originally issued in 1990 as an Xpressway cassette, is the culmination of his at-home craft and TEAC tinkering (with some help from other X-way artists like Bruce Russell, David Mitchell, Alastair Gabraith, Kathy Bull, Michael Morley and Robbie Yeats), with a truly breathtaking array of songstyles that take you from serene piano escapades to disturbing spindly-guitar bits to kitchen-sink solitude to skeletal, stormy, guitar-laden hypnosis, with the constant throughout being Jefferies' unique, inviting warble. The CD version also includes the "Catapult" 7" collaboration between Peter and fellow Pagal Grind member Robbie Muir.

## **SLOVENLY:**

**Drive It Home, Abbernathy 7" EP**

Four brand-new tunes from one of the Bay Area's choicest bands of the last decade, their first new material since their excellent 1989 album **We Shoot for the Moon** on SST. Here they draw a map of surprisingly ample proportions within the space of a dozen or so minutes, with a lush sound that marks a departure from their previous records (including violins, backwards guitar, female vocals, and some previously unheard of slide guitar) yet doesn't fail to appease their cerebral side. A fine re-introduction.

## **VARIOUS ARTISTS:**

**Not All That Terrifies Harms 7" EP**

A co-release with San Francisco's Nuf Sed label, this Bay Area sampler steals six bits from the Nuf Sed cassette of the same name and throws them to the lions. Included are otherwise unreleased tunes from Thinking Fellers Union, Wienle Roast, Blow, World of Pooh (a cover of BÖC's "Domination and Submission"), and the Idiot (a half-minute of "I Got You Babe"), as well as a brief dose of Archipelago Brewing Co. This is music to crowd diapers to.

### **PRICES**

7"s = \$3

LPs = \$7

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## **OTHER RECENT RELEASES:**

THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282: **THE NATURAL FINGER 7"** • ANTISEEN: **"WALKING DEAD" 7"** • FISH & ROSES: **FRIAR TUCK RECORD 7"** • FIRE IN THE KITCHEN: **"SIMPLE ENGLISH" 7"** • WONDERAMA: **"PADRE PIO" 7"** • PETER JEFFERIES/ROBBIE MUIR: **"CATAPULT" 7"**



## REVIEWS

Send stuff for review (magazines, books, tapes, videos, records, CDs even, or whatever you want) to POB 8213, Atlanta, GA, 30306, USA. Reviews this time by Glenn Harper, Dea Ann Martin, Marc Moore, Larry Oberer, and Glen Thrasher. I wrote all the publication and live reviews. —G.T

### PUBLICATIONS

**Absecess #1** This new addition to the Georgia community of music zines is welcomed and needed. In addition to "the usuals" (i.e. band interviews and record/zine reviews), there is a smart piece by Thomas Peake (*of Soma mag.*) on the Bush administration's attitude toward atheists. Needless to say, it makes NWA's attitude toward women look fairly enlightened. The music coverage is mixed between punk/hardcore type bands and way-out noise. It was really great to see the piece on last year's happenings at Kiang. Let us hope that Ben can keep this thing going. (\$1 plus postage from Ben Davis, 104 Willowdell, Toccoa, GA, 30577, USA)

**Black Milk #s One & Zero** Excellent printing, layout and design distinguish this musiczine. There might be more issues by the time you read this, but the two I've seen are still worth checking out. It seems like One came before Zero, but I'm not sure about that. One has stories on Claw Hammer, Caroline Rainbow, Unholy Swill, and the guy who does Sympathy For The Record Industry Records. Zero has Royal Trux, Pain Teens, and a nice disgusting piece of fiction called "The Shovel Gun." Both issues have some record reviews, and interesting art. The copies I received included posters, and inserts of limited quantity. (from 2545 NE 33, Upper, Portland, OR, 97212, USA)

**Breakfast Without Meat #14** Along with *Bananafish*, *Breakfast Without Meat* marches the lone road toward truth and understanding in the world of music zines. This is where you will read about important bands like Caroline Rainbow, 101 Strings, and the Mystic Moods Orchestra. They also had the greatest interview I've ever read with songwriter Jimmy Webb, the smartest record reviews under the sun, and the coolest flexi-disc of 1990. All this wonderful stuff is yours for a mere \$3 from POB 15927, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87506, USA.

**Envision Life #4** The best thing about this radical onesheet is/was the "Help Yourself to a Better Job!" sticker that came with it. Stick this up in your workplace and watch your head roll! (from i.e.s.c., Bldg. F, Rm 208E, Olympia, WA, 98505, USA)

**Forced Exposure #17** So you already know about this one? Or maybe you just think you already know about this one. Even with fifty pages of record reviews this has turned into a lot more than a music mag. I bet you've heard that before. The really weird thing about *Forced Exposure* is that it has "matured" so much over the years, while remaining somehow as juvenile as every, and I probably do a good job of that myself. I know for some reason I'm supposed to hate this, but for some other reason I find myself reading it with glee. This issue starts out on the right track with a letter from the always charming Steve Albini: "Having flipped through your last two issues, I have finally gotten a handle on your current aesthetic. You are fucking idiots, is what it is." From here on out it is up and down tour of said fucking idiots' aesthetic. There's a giant interview with MX80 Sound. If you also thought they didn't exist anymore you were not alone. Then there's a fascinating talk with *El Toro*, *Santa Sangre* director Alexandro Jodorowsky, and finally another mammoth proportioned interview, this time with writer Rudy Rucker. In between the interviews is prose by Richard Meltzer, Suzy Rust, and Eugene Chadbourne. After that there are a bunch of reviews of records, books, and videos. The reviews by Steve Albini of records he produced are pretty amusing, and Chris D's reviews of stuff from his video collection are always interesting. (from POB 9102, Waltham, MA, 02254, USA)

**Koan Issue One** Five pages of this twelve page zine are taken up by an interview with James (alias: Bubba, etc.) Taylor Jr. of *Psychodrama* (now *Ignored*). Local readers with short memories should take note: Bubba is the less fat one that looks like a biker and came to blows with gobs of audience members at the third DAM fest, not the more fat one in the Harley panties, painted black face and body, and swastika on belly. The weird thing is the guys interviewing Bubba sound even dumber than he does, but I know they must not be all that dumb or they wouldn't be smart enough to print something as funny, entertaining, and just plain smart as this. The rest of the issue includes a couple of music reviews I didn't read, four publication reviews I did read of stuff I've never seen, and a funny, presumably legitimate, "Dear Ann" reprint. **Issue Two** is a pretty sorry follow-up to the grand first edition. This time around there's nary a mention of Lord Jim. Instead there are four pages on some foolish sounding guys from a band called Borax Orgy. Although the design of this thing is as dry as *The Naïon* or something, some of the other writing is interesting. I also like the photos of a video head of Madonna attempting to suck somebody's limp penis, but the stupid looking semi-porn front cover is a real stinker. (from POB 18278, Washington, DC, 20036-8278)

**Mal Life #19** This is an eight & a half by five & a half hodgepodge of neat junk from these reliable folks. Loads of contributors, the likes of Bob Black, Malok, Jake Berry, Thomas Wiloch, Minoy, Ruggiero Maggi, Miroslav Janousek, etc., etc., make this a rotating 3-ring circus of the mind. *Mal Life 19* is a big whopping scoop of the new antipostshitfuckculture. You asked for it, so dig in. (from POB 17686, Phoenix, AZ, 85011, USA)

**Maximum Rock And Roll #90** (Whew!!!) Until I picked this one up, it had been years since I'd read an issue of this energetic oldfart punkzine. Their are a couple of reasons for this. One is I'm lazy and have better things to do with my time. The other is for the sake of this column: everybody has read and read about *Maximum* and nobody needs my four and a half cents worth. I picked up this issue because I was surprised to see our buddies the Dwarves screaming from the front cover. (No I don't really know the Dwarves, but I was one of those that got called pussies by them at their Atlanta show for moving way back to avoid the onslaught of tossed beer, so I feel close to the boys.) Despite the presence of the Dwarves and the enthusiastic support of bands like the Laughing Hyenas and Silverfish (5 years ago it would never have happened!), *MRR* hasn't changed so much. It still has those funny boring little scene reports. It still has shitty say-nothing reviews in the back. (The publication reviews have actually gotten more in-depth: from four words to seven words each!) It still has crappy interviews with bands you can't tell apart and probably don't want to. It still has tons of hilarious letters from adolescent punksters of all ages, followed by more of the same thing in the form of editorial words of wisdom from Board, Lawrence Livermore, Chadbourne, etc. And this is still the best part of the magazine. Coming back to this one after all this time and finding so much that is the same was kind of reassuring, like going back home after twenty years and finding that nothing has changed but the price of gasoline to get there. That's progress for you! As for the Dwarves, you will not find much out about them here, and certainly not the answer to the heavy question posed on the cover. About the most substantial answer I found here was to the question: "Why did you move to California?" Answer: "More Pussy." It's basic truths like that that make the editors of *Maximum Rock N Roll* deserving of you hard earned two backs fifty. Send it to them at POB 288, Berkeley, CA, 94701, USA.

**Not Bored #17** It's good to see something like this hanging around, still being itself after so many years. The editor/author these days chooses to remain anonymous, but these pages reel and rock under the power of personality. Topics at hand include insidious racism in NB's new hometown of Providence, Rhode Island; Fear of a Black Planet; *Factsheet Five* and

situationist writing; and (best of all) "6 People Or Things Who Or That Can Fuck Themselves As Far As I'm Concerned." (from POB 3421 Wayland Square, Providence, RI, 02906, USA.)

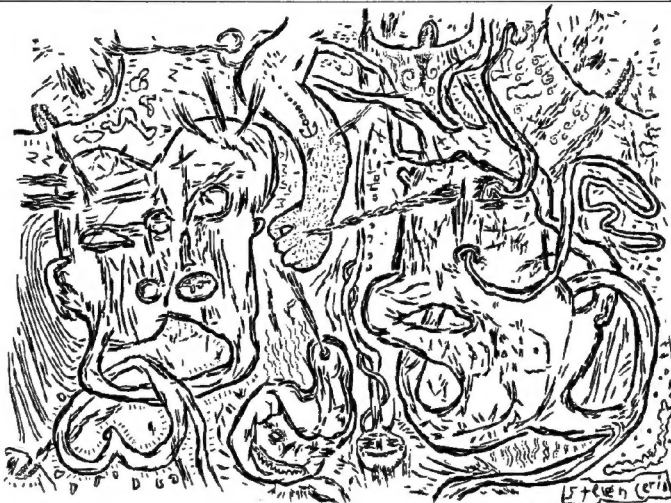
**On Site** *On Site* is almost entirely made up of (better than I am capable of writing) reviews of almost all the records I have gotten free in the mail since my last issue. And although Bob and I don't always concur, we come close fucking enough for you people. So get this now and you will not need to bother reading all my reviews. This perhaps seems an odd recommendation to those of you who have been following LL reviews of this zine. In LL #141 I wrote of *On Site* what was perhaps the nastiest one line putdown review I've published of another fanzine, and this guy diligently kept sending his successive issues for my unkind appraisal. I was curious about this "development" myself so I looked back at his #4 (couldn't find the supposedly loathsome #3) in order to re-evaluate. Although Bob's reviewing style hasn't changed much over the months, #9 is a big improvement over #4. Aside from a couple of fairly perceptive reviews there just isn't much in #4 to recommend it by. The self sure nature of Bannister's writing just doesn't hold up in the context of the earlier issue, and the Fire in the Kitchen self promotion is a lot less irritating when it is about 2% of the whole text instead

of 10%. All of which seems to imply I believe more is better than less, and nothing could be further from the truth. What is the truth? You got me there, but at this point in the history of the world I'll say this: *On Site* #4 is not without worth, but #9 is simply overflowing with smart writing. The diatribe against teenboy hatescene rivalry is right on the mark. Bob is even learning to write effective oneline putdown reviews like us big league pitchers. I suggest comparing products of love, imagination and effort to various forms of skin disease or simply suggesting that the artist would be better off if they specialized in fucking animals. (\$1 from Bob Bannister at POB 309 Cooper Station, New York, NY, USA)

**Provincial Notes** #s One, Two, Three,... Lang Thompson has been involved with the indie network thing for years and years, although you might not believe it from the large number of lame major label releases (*Songs For 'Drella*, the Pixies, etc.) honored in his "best of 1990" lists. He has regularly contributed to numerous fanzines including *Option*, *Sound Choice*, and *LowLife*. (Yeah! I know *Option* is a "periodical", not a "fanzine." We consider "periodicals" to be publications that appear regularly, so regularly, we usually line our bird cages with them as soon as they arrive.) Lang is one of the few "music writers" around making any effort to write intelligent, thoughtful prose, without quite stooping to be Griel Marcus or Simon Frith, and

he is appreciated for that around these parts. Unfortunately he's never quite managed to get his (proverbial) shit together and put out the full sized zine of his dreams. So instead he's cranking out these neat two pagers, and I got them at a rate of three in (at most) as many months. Then they stopped coming. These little zines remind me of bite sized versions of Jack Thompson's *Swellsville* or Frank Kogan's *Why Music Sucks*. In other words, they are pretentious but down to earth, shallow but far reaching, and serious minded but funny. Issues number One and Three are good, but my favorite is Two, "The State of Film Criticism" edition, in which Lang lists, among other things, some of his favorite quotations from Film Critic extraordinaire, Jim Whaley. Lang deserves an Oscar or a Grammy or something for the way he introduces the Whaley stuff. Lang probably never intended this photo-copied publication to get reviewed, but I "reviewed" it anyway. (\$1 from POB 49604, Atlanta, GA, 30359, USA)

**Smur** (A Family Magazine) The fifth (?) issue from the fine folks at Schiz-Flux is my favorite edition yet. Interesting, smart writing on the issue of child sexuality, especially the introductory, "Wild Children," informative, interesting pieces on Mae Brussel and the Situationist International, and great graphics and slogans come wrapped in the best fanzine cover I've seen in years. (from POB 3502, Madison, WI,



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**Soma (Frugivorous Apes Issue)** This is the fourth (presumably the last) edition of this independent minded zine. Though not particularly hefty in scope, it is not something I can't dismiss or put into a pigeonhole. I hate to see another interesting Atlanta based zine fall by the side of the road, due to, I think in this case, parental opposition. Editor Thomas writes about and publishes what he wants to publish, which is reason enough for him to keep it up. Letters, reviews, nice art, poetry, and an interview with Transvalue (!?) make up most of this issue. It reads good, looks great, and turns into a piece of art as soon as you take it home and place it carefully onto your favorite coffee table or pile of stuff. (\$2 from Ga. Tech POB 35526, Atlanta, GA, 30332, USA)

**Sound Choice #16** Around February of '85 reading the first issue of *Sound Choice* convinced one aspiring editor that he could turn his locally based zine into a magazine with national overtones. If *Sound Choice* is still around (that other zine is!), it's still doing exactly what it wants to do with no regard for what the voices of the moment tell it to do. It may not be the kind of magazine that you or I would produce, but that's why they invented typewriters and personal computers and photo-copy machines. You are supposed to

make your own magazine. In the meantime, read this one. The last one I saw was this special issue with Timothy Leary on the cover. It has the dubious distinction of using the word "consciousness" more times than any magazine published since 1972, but still has a horseshit load (i.e. non-conscious-raising amount) of reviews. Yet, they are reviews of stuff "tuned to the pulse of global consciousness expansion." This time around these include reviews of Gerard Cosloy's fanzine *Conflict* as well as records by the Bastards and Yo La Tengo. Not to worry though, because you will not want to read any of these silly blurbs unless they are the ones written by Dean Suzuki because he knows exactly what he's talking about or the ones by David Ciuffardini for different reasons. Like some Orson Welles protagonist, David is a mammoth man and hubris victim, atop the mountain of his self-made empire, stubbornly, bravely walking down the path of personal righteousness. Watch him work from POB 1251, Ojai, CA, 93023, USA.

**Swellsville #10** Funny issue! I can't really understand why anyone would want to read this unless they are more interested in rock/pop criticism (or specifically rock critics) than in rock/pop music. Editor Jack claims a circulation of five hundred. Are there really that many rock crit wannabes/maybes out there in readerland? Probably. A fairly large number of presumed rock critics actually contribute words of wisdom here. They talk about stupid stuff like Public Enemy lyrics and articles they read in the *Village Voice*. They endlessly

analyses people I've never heard of like Greil Marsh and Marcus Krisco. Most of this issue is made of so called desert island lists where these pathetic people name hundreds of consumer products (they would supposedly bring along if they had to go live on an island) that make their silly lives seem to be worth living. I don't know what it is these guys (almost all of the contributors are men) intend to do with all this stuff once they land on Gilligan's. Plastic doesn't really burn too well, paper has very little nutritional value, and CD's do weird shit when you microwave them. None of the list contributors even mention the need for somebody like the Professor to come along to help with technical stuff, not to mention somebody to help carry boxes of records. Not in a million years will I believe Chuck Eddy or Fred Miles capable of building a working phonograph player from coconuts and palm leaves! (Has anybody that doesn't work in a video rental store ever seen this dumb Nicholas Roeg movie called *The Castaways*? It is about these two people who decide to go live on a deserted island for a while. At the beginning of the film the couple don't know each other too well, but after a few days or weeks on the island they hate each other's guts. It is kind of like *Blue Lagoon* without puppy love or puppies. Or a rewrite of (take your pick) *The Garden of Eden* or *Lord Of The Flies*. The two actors are mostly naked a lot of the time and get sick and repulsive toward the end. They had no time for

the Digital Underground or Yo La Tengo. I guess that is because they were not rock critics. #11 Another issue, pretty much the same shit, some lists, but not as many. Best part: Frank Kogan's page. 2nd best part: Chris (Black To Comm, Phudd) Stigliano's letter. 3rd best part: all of Jack Thompson's responses to letters. This magazine is really funny most of the time even when it is not trying to be. Worst parts: all quotes from, mentions of, contributions by this moron Chuck Eddy. I can't believe there is actually someone somewhere who is willing to pay this puddinghead to write about music. 2nd worst part: the cover. Buy this man an art director, please. (\$2.50 from POB 85334, Seattle, WA, 98145, USA)

**Tinnitus Today** ("The Journal of the American Tinnitus Association") is dedicated to covering the study of tinnitus (head noises) and those that suffer from it (them). These efforts are maintained in face of the fact (as I gather from reading this magazine) that there is no real cure at this point in time. Fans of head noises and sufferers alike might well want to check out this unusual and academic publication. (from POB 5, Portland, OR, 97207, USA)

**Toilet Suck** is a nice name for this collection of not so nice writing by a guy obsessed with ventriloquist dummies and sex. I guess this is supposed to be really hard edged material but comes across merely adolescent. At least the author/editor is getting something done. And he's doing it in this well conceived zine setting. Perhaps he'd be better off refining his craft rather than packaging it for consumption. Perhaps he believes there is no time to be waiting when there is so much to be said and so many forces trying to shut up the voice of the little man/woman. Naturally, I tend to side with the tendency to get something out at any cost, though I see no sign that this practice can turn a talentless writer into a good writer. Those curious to check out the efforts of the editor of *Toilet Suck* for themselves need only send a stamp to Peter Warner at POB 2581, Times Square Station, New York, NY, 10108, USA.

**Toad Hiway #2** Here's another neatly packaged collection of poems of varying and questionable value. The overall tone is vague "surrealism," a description that lumps into one heap several diverse and tentative aesthetics. The chapbook format, as much as any (i.e. the gallery, prozines, etc.) has a way of putting things in a certain perspective, in this way, coloring a whole set of images. The interesting photography and tasteful illustrations and collages likewise distract (or enhance) whatever the writers are trying to say. (\$2 from POB 44, Universal, Indiana, 47884, USA)

**Weird Flowers #3** 33% of this magazine is odd and or curious newspaper clippings. Another 33% is record and show reviews and vastly worthless form letter interviews with musical greats like the Lemonheads. The final 33% of the issue is a rather insightful section on censorship. Editor/bossman Jim McMartin has an annoying penchant for dropping letters from his words. Some of my favorite of his invention include "incl.," "dif.," and "oh," but it seems like Jim is doing this less in this issue than in his previous two editions. He also loves those lower cases. Some of you may be wondering about the other 1% of *Weird Flowers*. These are little nuggets like his "Zine-Review Reviews!" in #3 where Jim answers the critics. All and all not as crummy as first glance might have it, *Weird Flowers* is available for \$2 from Jim McMartin at 10 Gore Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6J 2C6.

**What Goes On #4** It's been something like four years since the last issue of this Velvet Underground fanzine came out, but I'm not complaining. It makes me feel good about my own rigorous publishing schedule knowing there is something like this around. Of course, I'm not sure why anyone would want to read one more word about this subject matter after all that's already been written on them. If anybody does, here are 78 more pages with color photos, an interview with cover girl Moe Tucker, coverage of a Velvet Underground reunion show (including a flexi with members discussing their feelings about the event), and (my favorite part) a talk with Moe's teenage daughter. Best quote: "I don't even like the Velvet Underground." These people will do anything for a new angle on the topic at hand, including printing Tim Stegall's stupid survey of VU influenced bands. (from 5721 S.E. Laguna Ave., Stuart, FL, 34997-7828, USA)

**Wig Out #17** The hard rocking printed voice of the band Girl Trouble is a lot more fun to listen to than any of the group's records that I've heard. This was supposed to be the special Christmas '90 edition. Though I didn't get my copy until after the New Year, I found this to be worth reading and timeless. "Dear Wig Out" is one of the most catchy and danceable letters sections of our era. The features include a long overdue Banana Splits documentary, an insightful look at Television Christmas, the only Christmas that ever mattered, and a fashion column that checks out the marvelous never-to-be forgotten 70s rage known as "Pop-Topping." Rock n Roll never died it merely learned to write and forgot how to sing. The result: *Wig Out*. (from POB 44633, Tacoma, WA, 98444, USA)

**Zero Hour #3 (Sex Issue)** This is another fine issue of this bizarre tabloid though something of a letdown after the rocking previous "addiction" issue. Although there is a lot of good stuff here, the editors don't go far enough toward exploring

the several cans of bees opened up inside, and for a mag that spends so much page space addressing feminist ideas the tits and clits to cocks ratio is way out of balance. I enjoy the little blarbs, clippings and words of wisdom that break in between longer features, but Alice Wheeler's photos of rock bands and fashion models are really a waste of paper and ink. Of course, the former gives the editors an excuse for putting "Sonic Youth" and "Soundgarden" in bold large type on the cover. Similarly, the (count them) six record reviews would not be missed, although the girl band photo at the top of the page almost justifies their inclusion. On the positive side there is a lot to recommend this magazine for. The Kathy Acker interview and Jack Stevenson Romanian road diary were welcomed surprises. Also of much interest were the articles on nude dancing, Dora Kosy's study "Japanese Porn," and Kimberly Reason's "She Asked For It". *Zero Hour's* sex issue looks at the topic of choice from many angles without wincing or winking or moralizing (much), which is surprising considering editor J. Jones' confession of practicing Catholicism. Anyway, it is nice to know that in this age of intolerant neopunitarianism, something like this can still find a printer. (\$4 from POB 766, Seattle, WA, 98111, USA)

## BOOKS



Grace Braun: *3 Pages of Very Bad Luck Will 7 Save* (A Golden Book)

Art created using the resources of the photocopy machine has a history by now and some of the reasons that an art would choose this medium are obvious. Accessibility and relatively low production costs are two of these, but I think that there is an aesthetic question, a realm of choice, that demands more than satisfactory answers to the problems involved with reproduction. An artist might make the choice to use photocopy as she would any other material, because of qualities inherent in the medium itself, and this seems provocative to me. Braun's book reminds me of Helen Chadwick's piece *On Mutability* though each is very different in content and intent. Chadwick's piece is a large installation, clearly intended for museum viewing, in which photocopy is one element of many. Braun's work is more tightly focused and, since it is a book, it's dissemination will necessarily be very different. There is a deliberation to both pieces however which the use of photocopied images seems to emphasize. Flesh pressed to the glass of the copy machine has an immediacy that is lacking in a photograph of the same piece of flesh...it doesn't seem as translated. On each page of Braun's book is an image of a hand or hands belonging, I suppose, to the artist. The hands seem to reach out of the murky

background and into the oxygen folded around the paper. Shadowy text surrounds the hands capsuling them in the imperative tone of its narrative which seems at times awed by the gravity of the information that it transmits. Three line drawings "illustrate" the text in a more overt way than the hands yet they, like the other elements of the book, push at the constrictions of linkage. The drawings float against the backdrop of hands and text...integrated yet in a skewed way as though they had landed on the pages instead of being placed there. There is a haphazard feeling to this as well as what I read as very stem intent. The elements of the book come together to make an object that is clever, yet poignant in a way that clever objects rarely are. There is an urgency to this and I hesitate to say this because I don't mean to suggest that it isn't any fun. My favorite drawing is one of a demented looking black cat perched at the top of a ladder. The cat is holding an open umbrella and is grinning as though something has happened only moments before. There is an ominous looking stain on the wall behind it. The back cover (last page?) is labeled "A GUNNY BOOK". This struck me, at first, as funny and sort of bratty. Now, I think that there's more wistfulness than sarcasm in those four syllables although the balance is tenuous. The same might be said about the book as a whole.

This book feels talismanic in my fingers and again, I keep thinking "object" more than "book". This is just exactly itself as objects are and books sometimes are not and I'm not trying to argue that this has nothing to say. This is very original. Serious. The resonance of gray skin glowing against the darkened gray background reminds me of...well, of photographs I've seen of the Shroud of Turin. There's that same kind of weird illumination. I keep picking this up..... (from *Bangaway*)—Dea Anne Martin

**Rodger Lytle Brown: *Party Out of Bounds* (Plume)** The people who will actually pay money for this book fall into two basic categories. Category one consists of the handful who think they might find their names listed inside. Category two: REM fans. Fortunately for the pocketbooks of the publishers and author, the second category is considerably larger than the first. B52 fans could be added on as a third category, but I don't think it makes much difference in this context. This book would not exist if REM had not turned into mega-stars. Rodger Brown is to be commended for being the first person to cash in on this angle of the REM business. I'm surprised it took so long. With all these Athenian would-be superstars, whose college/post-college/extra-college lives populate Brown's text, I'm surprised one of them didn't think of this sooner. I suppose, these "kids who rocked Athens," for whom

life itself was art (as Brown probably says here somewhere), were probably too busy to figure out a way to cash in on their own lore status. I bought this book, although I can barely recognize an REM song face to face and knew my name wouldn't be in it. The guy at the book store told me he'd sold a copy to an REM mother the day before.

Whether or not Brown was a participant in the *Lord of the Flies/Gilligan's Island* scenario he describes is uncertain. On the back cover an REM member says of the Athens story, "Rodger should know." Brown is also pictured in the photo gallery, framed with Vanessa of Pylon, circa 1983. In fact, Brown's face has been popping up all over the place lately. Witness, the recent cover story in *Atlanta's Creative Loafing*, never one to miss out on a chance to blow the horn of one of their own. Non-Atlantans still with me should note that Rodger Brown is a regular contributor to *CL*. He does those hilarious and scary "Blotter" items collected from actual police reports. You know, a 59 year old woman on Apple Blossom Lane told police that her 86 year old mother hit her with a baseball bat. The woman said she swung at her daughter because of her involvement with drugs and alcohol, and her unwillingness to accept household responsibilities.

It seems Brown collected material for this book in much the same haphazard, curious, money-minded way that he collects items for his newspaper column. The resulting essay is an unbalanced, unfinished, unabashed fictionalization that leaves you with the feeling that there are lots of other stories to be told, not that you will want to know more of them. Brown got his two hundred pages worth out of this legend that was Athens, and that is probably about all he or anybody else could stand. It was even necessary to stray outside of Athens city limits from time to time in order to find this much to write about. Two entire chapters are made out of Atlanta events with Athens angles. An Atlanta band, the Fans, is discussed at some length, and Brown claims Mike Green (later of Boat Of, Peach Of Immortality and most ridiculously, Wyfe) quit the band after seeing how much better the B52s were.

It is interesting to see what strange things did manage to sneak into the finished, published text. Like REM's first Atlanta show at a downtown warehouse (actually it was the infamous Warehouse run by members of Atlanta's noisy anti-Rock bands Kaos and Vietnam...), where these future *Rolling Stone* coverboys had to follow a chaotically charming comedy set by Redmeat and Sprouz. To refresh your memory Redmeat and Sprouz featured among others: Mollie "Toast Boy" Worthington, Tom "King of Schlock" Zarrilli, Paul "Candidate from Space" Burke and Eloise Montague (later of the Athensesque

Atlanta band the Now Explosion—not to be confused with REMish). If my foggy memory is correct this was Eloise's first time out with the comedy group, and she nervously performed "In Heaven" from the *Eraserhead* soundtrack. Pete Buck's response, as reported by Brown: "Fuck them!, Fuck them!"

Limbo District also gets mentioned in a couple of places, and they get a whole three sentences when Brown is attempting to describe the division between REM and "the art-rock folk." Rodger Brown says "Limbo District was considered far better than REM," but REM surpassed them. "And they were going to prove it." So that's why they became so popular, to prove they were better than Limbo District! I guess that's also why the Black Crowes got popular, to prove they were better than Freedom Puff! Even Tom Smith gets a mention for his anti-REM stance, though there's but a wisp of a mention of Boat Of. The bone of legitimacy in this book is not artistic breakthroughs or the ability to clear a room (an ability attributed to Limbo District herein) but the number of records a given band put out. More important than that is how closely related said band is to REM, and to a lesser degree the B52s, and to an even lesser degree to Pylon. Because that's what we're here for, to make money off the name of REM. Brown more less states this fact in the preface. That's what he means by historically relevant. Fair enough!

As rock books go, this is no *Psychotic Reactions* or *Lipstick Traces*, but it is not supposed to be that kind of rock book. Where *Party Out of Bounds* is short on philosophy, it is thick on gossip. Somebody I know said that they thought it was a bit offensive as such, in its naming of names. After digging through this trashbin in an afternoon, vaguely knowing many of the named individuals, I would guess most of them (who are not members of REM, etc.) are pretty happy to have these exuberant moments of late adolescence set into type for the inspection of eternity. Brown tries to tie this Athens thing into a neat little bundle, making connections between things, and finding cloudy bits of implied meaning in the random succession of events that make up the lives of real live humans. Brown begins his tale of the Athens scene with the members of the B52's getting together and eventually forming a band. He concludes it with death and break-ups on one side and the (presumably) triumphant release of *Murmur* on the other. The posthumous tone of Chapter 27 has that same scene dead and buried. As proof Brown points at the dreaded *Athens, Ga., Inside/Out* movie, which at least had the dignity to include Jim Herbert's Limbo District film. Brown fails to mention this fact. He also forgets to mention the one missing coffin nail needed to seal the dead scene away for good. You guessed it! A book capturing those fun times gone by.

With *Party Out of Bounds*, Rodger Brown has effectively made a mountain out of a mole hill. More specifically he has made a book out of the fragmented half-remembered/half-invented young lives of a bunch of kids who were nothing special. Most of us, whether or not we hung out with members of the B52's or REM, have gone through comparable moments of youthful abandon. Some of us keep going at it until it kills us or something else happens. Perhaps that is part of the universal appeal of a book like this one, but I think not. The real trick is that Rodger Brown has turned this Athens thing into a story that has a beginning, middle, and end. Nevertheless, that's what writers do, as if a life (or a whole mess of lives) would follow rules of narrative. If a writer failed to do this, he would probably be called a bad writer. I don't think I would call Brown a bad writer. He's just written a bad book, that's all. —G.T.

**J.G. Eccarius: *The Last Days Of Christ the Vampire & We Should Have Killed the King*** (III Press) The first of these two books is an energetic and amusing combination of the classic occult novel (think of Aleister Crowley combined with Bram Stoker), the collegiate coming-of-age book, anarchist comic books, *The Life of Brian*, pop politics, bad puns (a radio station with the call letters KCUF, Batbit for Baptist), and the late "dark" works of Mark Twain ("The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg" or *Letters from Earth*). The combination is engaging and experimental, stretching the bounds of the contemporary novel both formally and politically. In the second of the two works, Eccarius unfortunately has chosen his models more from the likes of George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* or the works of Tom Robbins, but with Orwell's sense of humor and Robbins' political insight. This tale of dropouts and anarcho-revolutionary cell meetings and demonstrations is disappointingly earnest after the comedy of the first book. Even the editorial comments are self-righteously earnest, proclaiming that no editorial intervention was imposed on the text other than "running (it) through a spelling checker"—the lack of editorial interest in the text is evident in the annoying typos of the sort: a machine will not catch ("surf" for "serf," "breath" for "breathe"). The author also feels the need to telegraph any punch his opening chapter, set in the English "Great Rebellion" of 1381, might have had as historical fiction by giving a history lesson in his "author's introduction."

The rest of *We Should Have Killed the King* is self-indulgent post-Kerouac, with just enough self-mocking humor to raise the story above

adolescent imitation of the Beats. In spite of the evident effort to be politically correct in the area of feminism, the women in the text are mostly objects of the male characters' desire. A paragraph on page 165 (printed twice on the page in another apparent editor's error) is typical of Eccarius' attempt to get inside his female characters' heads (typically, also, in the act of sex rather than any other activity or experience): "She came to her senses with the feeling of a babe satisfied, the semen salty pungent rolling down her throat, her hand sticky and her brain stretched with having come, having been his penis and the perfect pleasure of sucking at once." Surely we have heard enough of women's voices on their experience of sex to save us from another description of female pleasure in terms of the penis—Eccarius even offers us some of these voices, in a self-critical chapter of women's complaints about his main character, but one short chapter's comic self-mockery does not relieve him of the responsibility of the text as a whole.

I may have prejudiced myself against *We Should Have Killed the King* by reading it at the same time as Kathy Acker's *Empire of the Senseless*. Acker's book deals with some of the same subjects: abusive parents, marginal culture, anarchist ideas. But Acker's book has a life and a depth that Eccarius' doesn't, and she manages the blurring of sexual boundaries in a way that he doesn't. She also plays with history rather than fictionalizing it in a tired didactic and narrative "classics comics" form. *King* also suffers from comparison with *Vampire*, which is weird enough to compensate for the earnestness that also informs the politics and philosophy of the earlier book.

The ending of *King* is a "50 years later" dystopia of the sort we have seen a great deal of in mainstream and science fiction, including a coda very reminiscent of Olof Stapledon's future histories. It's function here is to provide a parallel with the 1381 story of the first chapter—the Jack Straw character of the main part of the book (named after a revolutionary of the 1381 incident) says "we should have blown up the factories," echoing the historical character's last words on the gallows, "we should have killed the king." The bleak eco-disaster of this chapter is convincing, but the missed opportunity to have corrected it is not, as the character himself recognizes in the last paragraphs. The ambiguity is the most effective aspect of the novel, but it is not enough to save it.

Overall, I would say that Eccarius needs to lighten up and have fun with his writing, as he evidently did in the earlier book. Attention to alternative forms of constructing a book as well as alternative politics would have helped this book. *The Last Days Of Christ the Vampire* is fairly well-known by now and for that reason I

don't feel the need to go into any detail about it. But its wild, conspiratorial heresy and its passages of comic but nonetheless effective occult horror are a welcome alternative to most of what is published in the anarchist or literary small presses. Please, more of the earlier outrageousness and less of the later earnestness. (from III Press)—Glenn Harper

**Geary Kaczorowski: *Swan Dive and other stories*** (Primal Publishing) I began each of these stories thinking "Yeah!" I like skulking, hungover narratives especially when embedded in situations which seem casually ridiculous and/or impossible. I ended each story thinking "Well, so what?" or more often, "Why am I still reading this?" I think what kept me going through this collection was the tease of promise and this is what continues to irritate me every time I think about this book. These stories ought to be good. A poverty of good ideas isn't the problem and there is an obviously skewed perception at work here but any pleasure that these might provide is buried in sloppy, cliché-studded prose. I began by attempting to find in the use of cliché and a seemingly sophomoric approach to explication a sort of subtle irony, but I think that my hopes were naïve. There is a carelessness in this writing that seems as though it must be willful and yet you know that it isn't because there wouldn't be any point to it. Words are used incorrectly. Plot transitions don't make sense. Gender changes are abrupt and dangle without explanation. Any or all of these would be effective narrative strategies but that isn't what they are...they are just very obvious mistakes. Human beings cannot "have" pathetic fallacy as is described in these pages. It sounds like a disease. Given that characters end up praying inside papier-mâché dinosaurs and going berserk over Scientology, it seems that these stories should at least follow through on the bizzareness that is promised. They don't. Almost all these stories fall flat. I think what annoys me the most about this book is its self important quality which I'm convinced is filtered to paper through the sensibility of an author who thinks that hanging lame prose on an interesting idea is enough to make something that others would be eager to read. While reading this, I kept imagining Kaczorowski looking over my shoulder smiling at his own words on the paper. "Heh, heh," he'd chuckle, "I'm one clever son-of-a-bitch, aren't I?"

I'm not sure why this book exists. I think that Geary Kaczorowski must be a smart, funny sarcastic guy who knows a lot of moderately interesting people who keep telling him that he ought to write down all this stuff...so he does. The problem is that Kaczorowski equates writing fiction with slapping an almost untranslatable personality down on paper but this only results for it

will shock and amaze even the most hardened aficionados of the bizarre. The folks at RE/Search made a wise choice to reissue this classic and give it the audience it deserves. I recommend *Freaks* to those curious about human extremes. (from RE/Search, 20 Romolo #B, San Francisco, CA, 94133, USA)—G.T.

**Semiotext(e): SF** (Edited by Rudy Rucker, Peter Lamborn Wilson, & Robert Anton Wilson) The anthology at hand is a rich collection of short stories (mostly), poems, art, essays and more all proudly pumped under the category of SF (that's science fiction not San Francisco). The editors of this volume contend Sci-fi is the last bastion of creativity in late 20th century literature. This is an opinion I question despite the presence here of amazing folks like Robert Sheekley, Phillip Jose Farmer, J.G. Ballard, Sol Yurick and others.

Much of the best fiction after Joyce, after Borges, after Beckett is the stuff that doesn't wave a Sci-Fi flag but does indeed dip into its language and mythology. Somebody like Kathy Acker has made a name for herself escaping the confines of reality bound fiction. Martin Amis' new novel *Time's Arrow* is a constrained rewrite of *The Time Machine*. Bill Burroughs' work has never had so much

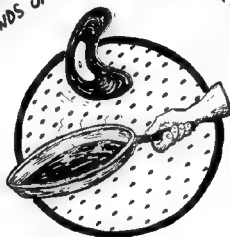
to do with the future or viable science, though science fiction likes to call him one of their own, at least this particular quadrant of science fiction. Burroughs is represented slightly in the anthology by two fragments, not among the highlights, for me. Some diary excerpts from Robert Sheekley take an angle on the question of science fiction as literature that differs sharply from the editors'. He calls Sci-fi "the great repository of outmoded literary forms, where the idea of objective storytelling still prevails."

Bruce Sterling's "We See Things Differently" is exemplary of the tendencies Sheekley is talking about. Sterling has written a story with an Islamic central character, concerning a near future in which fundamentalist Islam has become a world power. The editors marvel at the accuracy of the story derived not from personal experience but from research and imagination. I will not spoil this tale of religion and drugs and rock 'n' roll by telling too much of its plot. However, it is certainly a good example of the "objective story telling" mode, and a far cry from something like J.G. Ballard's "Report on an Unidentified Space Station" which projects a sort of simulacrum of contemporary everyday simulacrum. Ballard's piece probably didn't take too much research and is hardly what you'd call "objective."

The editors take pride in the gross, having called on contributors to "shock and disgust." Yet, they turn red faced all over the black and white page

trying to introduce stories by T.L. Parkinson and Michael Blumlein that look relatively tame next to stuff published in *LowLife* by Craig Woodall and Dea Anne Martin. Nevertheless, Blumlein's "Shed His Grace" is a beautifully written and effective bit of Ballard-esque nastiness about videotape and Coca Cola and Nancy Reagan and self-castration. Again, in the introduction to Ian Watson's "Vile Dry Claws of the Toucan" the editors come across like a bunch of wimps: "Watson has written more disgusting stories.....which we're glad we don't have to proofread and publish, stories we're trying to forget." Watson's story is another example of when science fiction can be really good, when it playfully runs all the stop signs, when it throws fake-science and horror and fantasy and sex into a machine called the post modern condition. Sol Yurick takes a similar route with his wordy, trashy satire called "The Great Escape," which should make the Samuel Beckett connection to science fiction obvious for anybody who has somehow heretofore missed it. (Harlan Ellison—who is not represented in this volume but hovers around in its shadow—has a famous story called "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream," which sounds like something out of *The Unnamable*) Phillip Jose Farmer's "St Francis Kisses His Ass Goodbye" is a more typical kind of science fiction but is a joy to read anyway, like anything I've ever read by Farmer. Of course, there are ample portions of church

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bashing and sex, before Farmer wraps the whole thing up, Armageddon and all in a minimal number of pages.

*SF* is a big fat paperback and has much more to offer than anyone would want me to try to get to in this space. There are shorts by William Gibson, Kerry Thornley, Robert Anton Wilson, Ivan Stang, Luke McGuff, Barrington J. Bayley, Rudy Rucker, Rachel Pollack, John Shirley and others. The book looks great with illustrations and graphics by Mike Saenz (whose slip book is a real chuckle), Sue Ann Harp, Richard Kadrey, James Koehnline, and Freddie Baer. The editors have attempted to scoop a bunch of incongruous elements into this one giant barrel. They've got a few Cyberpunks, a Subgenius or two, some conspiracy nuts, a few canonized masters, and a lot of unknown members of the fanzine fringe. The editors have done a remarkable job of turning all this fucked up stuff into one semi-coherent anthology. (from *S22 Philosophy Hall*, Columbia University, New York, NY, 10027, USA)—G.T.

**They Call Him Mr. Gacey** (McClelland Associates) I don't have any idea how C. Ivor McClelland got hold of these letters, and I have yet to figure out what kind of order they are in, but I do know that they aren't the kind of blood and guts thing you'd expect from a mass murderer. Gacey comes across as a pretty nice guy. He seems to be the kind of next door neighbor who'd offer you an ice cold Bud on the hottest day of the year, then bitch about the local politicians and taxes on his business. He claims he is not as guilty as people would like to believe. I have taken three abnormal psychology classes, and the three psychology of sex classes all under six different professors, and if Gacey did only one murder the way the rest were described he's one goddamned guilty motherfucker and deserves the death row deal he got. I cannot romanticize murder, and I sure as hell don't buy the innocence, but I do like the man's art, and I am very much amused by his choice of subject matter. The letters are from some pretty lonely people, from people trying to save Mr. Gacey's soul, and from people who either want to fuck Gacey's brains out or exploit him for every dirty rotten filthy dollar that can be made in any way they can. The fact that Gacey let these letters get published is amazing in itself. He's still appealing his case, and maybe he figured the nice next door neighbor approach would work out in his favor. I think everyone should own a Gacey work of art. I think no one should believe this guy didn't do the shit he's been accused of. Read these letters, read *Buried Dreams* by Russ Ewing, then see how it fits together. (from POB 563, Brighton, CO, 80601, USA)—Larry Obrec

## RECORDINGS



If there is one thing in this fucking world that fucking sucks (and I guess there are plenty of things that do) it's goddamned fucking CDs. They come in those stupid useless plastic outsides that are impossible to open. I always use hedge clippers. The inside containers are also dumb and usually don't fit together right. They cost too much, and the difference in sound quality ain't shit. However, promo compact discs from Arista and Warners fetch a nice price at Wax N Facts, if you hurry down and sell them quick before everybody else their copies. If you think big record companies and the people who work for them are smart because they have more money than you do, think again. I get lots of promotional records, cassettes, and CDs from folks like Arista, Reprise, CBS, etc. The funniest yet was the Bangles' *Greatest Hits*. In 1990 and 1991 I think I received about eight major label releases that I didn't sell or tape over, but you will not find even those few reviewed below. Arista gets my vote for the dumbest of them all, not only because they actually signed Michelle Malone and Dreams So Real, but because they sell LowLife two (or more) copies of every one of their stupid releases (frequently in more than one format—cassette or CD never LP). One comes to Glen, and the other comes to Olen. Smart, huh? Aside from all the crap the majors are putting out, there are hundreds and hundreds of fine releases (and tons of crap too) coming out on independent labels. I can't begin to keep up with the flow or write about all the records I buy or get free in the mail. What follows is not supposed to be a consumer guide or a reference for scholars of oddball noises. It's been a long time since LowLife 16 came out, and there is a lot of stuff that has come out since then that I like and have not written about in these pages. To those whose tapes, records or CDs fall into this category, I'm sorry. A few releases that I have been listening to recently but haven't gotten to in the paragraphs below include: Wyman Brantley: *between breaths* (cassette), Sebadoh: *III* (Homestead CD), Fish & Roses: *Friar Tuck* (Ajax 7"), Michelle Kenney & Louie Belogien: *Knot Other Than Love* (Aphid CD), Caroliner Rainbow: *Rise of the Common Woodpile* (L.P.), King Kong: *Old Man On the Bridge* (Homestead L.P.), Of Cabbages And Ants: *Basic Pain Pleasure* (Triple X L.P.), AntiScent: *Southern Hostility* (Rave L.P.), Nation of Ulysses: *13 Point Program to Destroy America* (Dischord L.P.), Public Enemy: *Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black* (Def Jam 2-L.P.), Einstürzende Neubauten: *Strategies Against Architecture II* (Mute/Warner Brothers 2-CD), Dirt: "Rugburn"/"Heavy Petting" (Worry Bird 7"), The Dead C: "Mighty"/"Power"/"Peace" (Forced Exposure 7" E.P.), *Show* (Public Bath double compilation cassette including a whole side of Ornoide Hatoba, and other Japanese weirdos w/maga-

zine), and *Japan Bashing Vol. 3* (Public Bath 2-7"). —G.T.

**A.C. Temple: *Sourpuss*** (Blast First! L.P.) According to the clerk at the record store where I bought it, *Sourpuss* knows many "Sonic Youth riffs." I wouldn't know about that. I'm not really familiar with Sonic Youth, although I think they have a record called *Dewey*. Nevertheless, I have heard a couple of other records by A.C. Temple which I liked so I willingly coughed up the 13 bucks it cost me to take this imported fellow home with me. A.C. Temple is a band not a man, and it should be filed with the A's not the T's. A.C. Temple is five English folks, and sometimes they remind this dumbfuck of later day Crass more than any screwdriver wielding New Yorkers. Of course there is not a ton of "political content," at least not spilling out into my face. A.C. Temple play music concerned with repetition and guitar noise. After listening to *Sourpuss* a number of times I'm not even sure I hear any "riffs" on here. If Sonic Youth was playing at the half-house Omni and A.C. Temple was playing at the Masquerade on the same night, I know where I would be. Do you? (from Pier Platters, 56 Newark St., Hoboken, NJ, 07030, USA)—G.T.

**Pheroan akLaff: *Sonogram*** (Mu cassette) This akLaff fellow is a major jazz drummer. On this cassette he plays with his four piece group, which includes soaring guitar wiz Sonny Sharrock and flawless tenor and alto sax by John Stubbfield and Carlos Ward. This is fine music, in a class with a lot of famous dead guys I could name, but upbeat and rockin' in a way that dumb contemporary people might like too. *Sonogram* is such a smooth creation, I sometimes want to hear some of the ugly hard edged sloppiness of their Mu brothers, Machine Gun. But these guys never seem to miss a note, and being good musicians doesn't make this a boring thing to listen to. In fact, it is one of the best new jazz releases I've heard. (—G.T.)

**G.G. Allin: *The Troubled Troubadour*** (Mountain 7" E.P.); **G.G. Allin: *Suicide Sessions*** (Homo cassette); **G.G. Allin & the Disappointments: *Live At Staches Bar*** (7" E.P.), G.G. Allin: *Anti-Social Personality Disorder Live* (Ever Rat cassette) Poor G.G. Allin! Here the guy is stuck in prison till who knows when and all these slimy record labels are cashing in on his bad luck. I have been advised by several friends that it is real uncool to give press to this woman-hating rapist sleazebag, and I don't doubt the correctness of the opinion. Still, there's something about the old boy I can't help but like. I guess he is a sexist, but like Psychodrama before him, his hatred seems to be fairly all encompassing. By the time you read this the current "crisis" in the mid-east will probably have turned into an all out war with real killing. In light of that and everything else, hatred seems like a more interesting subject



matter for "art" than dumb stuff like love. The press material that accompanied one of these releases included a list from Spin of the ten "sickest, most decadent rockers of all time." G.G. got number five with fakers like Alice Cooper and Ozzy Osbourne beating him out and sweet fucked up Sidney Vicious at number one. Of course, anybody that knows him would agree that G.G. is the undeniable number one sickest rocker ever. Still, I thought it indicative of his infamy that he managed to place at all among all those other way more famous fellows. Meanwhile G.G. rots away in prison while geeks like you sit at home and wonder how you can get your hands on all these releases. I'm not sure how much of the profits from any of these will go to Mr. Allin. Only one of them, *Live At Stache's Bar*, claims that all the money goes to the artist. It is also one of the most interesting for a couple of reasons. It plays from the inside out,

making it difficult to even listen to on many ordinary turn tables where the tone arm tends to go into reject when you hand place it near the inside of the record. Anybody that does manage to play the whole thing gets an entire show recorded just two months before G.G.'s incarceration. It is not a very long show, but G.G. is in top form and even manages a neat version of "Dead Flowers." The liner notes also include some telling words from G.G. on his current/perpetual situation, in which he comes across sounding pretty intelligent. Also notable is *The Troubled Troubador* E.P. Strange as it might seem, this is three acoustic! numbers with G.G. actually playing guitar and singing these downer bluesy songs about dying and being G.G. Despite the stupid black bar over G.G.'s pee pee and missing "u's" from all the "fuck's" in the song titles, *Anti-Social Personality Disorder* is another interesting live document. Including many G.G. hits such as "I'm Gonna Rape You," "Bite It You Scum," and "I Wanna Fuck Myself," this is typical G.G. noise that might make you wonder how the guy stayed out of jail as long as he did.

*Suicide Sessions* is a studio recording I don't

think is available elsewhere. It is a far more "hi-fi" recording than the other three and demonstrates how scary G.G.'s singing voice can be out of the intoxicating/intoxicated live state. The band is o.k. too, although this is a bit heavy on guitar solos for my taste. What the fuck do guitar solos have to do with G.G. Allin, anyway? These are just some of the many G.G. Allin recordings available to hungry "music" fans. There are also all those Black & Blue reissues, the Homestead studio stuff, the excellent New Rose collection, and lots more. I suggest the beginner start off by sending some flowers or something to G.G. (Special last minute note: G.G. is a free man at last, so crooks, schemers and everybody else better watch out!) (Ever Rat from POB 99284, Seattle, WA., 98188, USA/ Bitter Boy from POB 71, Plain City, OH., 43064, USA/ Mountain Records from POB 991, Hightstown, NJ, 08520, USA./ No address for Homo, sorry)—G.T.



## Blowhole

*Atlastopko* (L.P.) Switzerland seems to be a real breeding ground for noise and improvisation of all kinds. Witness all the interesting records from Vision, For 4 Ears, and Christoph Gallio's Percaso reviewed or mentioned in this issue. This is yet another Swiss release, a non-Vision record that nevertheless features Marcus Jud and Kreie from Ix-Ex-Splue and Role from Fluid Mask. This is not as great as, say, 16-17 but it is coming out of the same sense of groove. A pounding bass and drum attack meets head on with Jud's not-too-tame sax squawk. *Atlastopko* reminds me of the English funkpunk group Blur when they were really good circa 1981's *In Berlin*, minus the yelping vocals. For those that like their jazz and punk

and noise all blurry and mixed together, I highly recommend this record, if it is still available. This is actually a 1988 release that came out in a limited addition of 500. But since I don't recall ever having read a review of it elsewhere and don't know anybody else that owns a copy I suspect there might be a few of these things left lying around somewhere. Write to Ch. Fringeli, Richenring 169, CH-4058, Basel, Switzerland.—G.T.

**The AntiSeen: WXCI Live Radio Broadcast** (TPOS 7" E.P.) Despite the obnoxious presence of a couple of Yankee college d.j.s, this is AntiSeen's best (and most poorly recorded) piece of vinyl to date. I sure am glad Jeff Clayton doesn't smoke or drink, maybe this means he'll be able to sing that way forever. People in Atlanta pay seventeen dollars to see boring tripe like Social Distortion and Bad Brains, while America's greatest punk rock

band is ignored in our own back yard. But anybody who thinks all us Southerners are content to put up with all this prevailing hippy dippy tie dye bullshit should check AntiSeen out. (from 12 Mill Plain Rd., Danbury, CT, 06811, USA)—Marc Moore

**Azalia Snail: Snail Bait** (Albertine L.P.) Fuzzy guitar and reverberate dominate this first L.P. by this almost one-woman show. Azalia reminds me of a more "rock" oriented Sue Ann Harkey. What the word "rock" means in the context of music like this, I'm not so sure about. (Today on the phone Mitch Foy asked me if DQE was rock now. And I thought they always were!)

Sometimes rock means more than Freak Magnet/Bitch Magnet kind of stuff. This is experimental rock music that approaches rock from its own angle. Azalia plays all the guitar parts and (almost) all the song "rock" oriented stuff too. She is accompanied here and there throughout by two or three other people who play things like zither, bongos, and flute. Azalia's music manages at once to be lovely and dissonant, sort of like a female Helios Creed. If your grey matter is not already bleached Nazi white by bland retro flavored rock you probably have some room left up there for something this fresh. (from POB 154, Vauxhall, NJ, 07088, USA)—G.T.

**The Bats: The Law Of Things** (Communion/ Flying Nun L.P.) I read in *Option* where some

guy said this record made him want to kill himself. I've listened to the L.P. a number of times and was motivated toward somewhat less extreme actions, like humming or maybe tapping my foot. But much like my buddy over at *Option*, I too avoided the urges aroused by this mere record. The music on it is nice poppy stuff with good lyrics. In other words it is pretty much what you expect from a Flying Nun band. Although the Bais are closer to the Chills, than the Verlaines or the Tall Dwarfs. Song after song so loaded to the hilt with hooks and silky harmonies galore, these folks should have been around in 1966, and I'm sure they would have been way bigger than the Dave Clark Five. As it is in our present moment of history all they can hope to be is as big as Galaxie 500, which is a far lesser standard to go by and gives them little chance of ever making it on to the American Bandstand, where they so richly deserve to be. (from POB 95265, Atlanta, GA, 30347, USA)—G.T.

**Beat Happening: "Red Head Walking"/ "Secret Picnic Spot" (Sub Pop 7")** The best single in ages (maybe ever) from hard rockin Sub Pop is this sweet pair of pop tunes from our favorite wimpy teen bubblerockers. "Red Head Walking" is one of their vaguely Crampish songs, just noisy enough in the right places to raise it above the garage Tommy James and the Shondells sound this band probably aspires to, just sexy enough to make you forget how unsexy it is to be a teenager, and just rock n roll enough to make you forget how stupid rock has grown as it approaches the nice ripe pungent age of forty. Bret, Calvin and Heather (who don't look so much like teens, these days) know how to do the rock n roll thing so that it still means something, which is a pretty clever trick. "Secret Picnic Spot" is quite a different item, a welcomed anomaly in the predictable SP catalogue and not rock or roll or anything quite like that. Both sides available on redhead red vinyl from POB 20645, Seattle, WA, 98102, USA.—G.T.

**Beat Happening: *Dreamy* (Sub Pop L.P.)** In the new issue of *Your Flesh* somebody calls Beat Happening "the Smiths of the 90s," which I think is a pretty funny thing to say, though I barely know what the Smiths of the 80s sounded like. Funnier than that, is the fact that I keep finding myself liking everything the Smiths of the 90s put out. Funnier still is the alliance of these Smiths of the 90s with Sub Pop, a label better known for releasing records by Led Zeppelins of the 80s. Whatever the reasons for this winding up on Sub Pop, good, bad or indifferent, the final outcome is we've got a fine new L.P. by Beat Happening. It should pour a wheelbarrow full of sand into the motors of preconception in Sub Pop heads everywhere. And I can see a

major backlash coming against heretofore trendsetting mild mannered rockers like Beat Happening, the Verlaines, and Galaxie 500 within the ranks of the oh so hip underground fanzine sect as well as the famous bigtime mainstream rockier types. This will probably mean these bands will get popular and start selling lots of records and making money. Galaxie 500 and the Verlaines probably get to go first, but Beat Happening could be right behind them. Maybe they are too peculiar and incorrect to be molded into regular rock stars. So that perhaps Beat Happening is destined to be something like the Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers of the 90s. Nevertheless, so far, Beat Happening has put out about three more great albums than Jonathan Richman has released in his entire stringy two-decade-old career. The most memorable song on this latest record is Heather's song "Collide" with its feedback layer, roller coaster tempo, and great simple words. There are at least nine other good songs on this record. (from POB 20645, Seattle, WA, 98102, USA)—G.T.

**Beme Seed: *Lights Unfold* (No. 6 L.P.)** The second L.P. from Beme Seed is a far cry from the brilliant *Living 7"* of a few years ago, and that is a shame because Kathleen Lynch seems to be no less boiling with fire and fury than ever before. This founding mother of Atlanta noise is these days into mind expansion of the nonchemical variety, and she goes to places normal folks must fear glimpsing only within the deep intoxication of the nightmare. There she finds strength and conviction. I never know what she is waiting about, but I still admire the delivery. I would like to hear the voice louder and clearer, less filtered and distorted. I would basically like to hear less band and more Kathleen, but with each subsequent release Kathleen has moved in the opposite direction, burying her amazing voice beneath a shroud of other stuff, in particular this uninspired, though competently loud rock band. (from 611 Broadway, Suite 311, NY, N.Y., 10012, USA)—G.T.

**Big Fish Ensemble: *Way Out West* (Sardine cassette)** That this band is not my style says more about me for having a "style" than it does about them for not being part of it. Amongst Atlanta's current "rock" implosion Big Fish Ensemble is pretty unusual. More than anybody else in my ten years of living in the neighborhood, Big Fish Ensemble have captured "the sound of Little Five Points," and they've probably done this without even trying. Depending on your point of view, this could be a big accomplishment or something to be avoided for. Among the leather and black clad crowd that infests shows by the Go-Devils, the Doll Squad, Freak Magnet, Dirt, King Kill 33, Magic Bone et al, this band probably represents the nadir of evil, wholesome, commercial music, but among the perhaps larger, not so angst ridden, not so posey early twenties crowd

that populates the Nolen/Reeves axis of clubs, Big Fish Ensemble are probably dead on the mark the best thing to come along since the Jody Grind. Paul Schwartz, who writes a lot of the songs on this tape and sits on the edge of the stage a lot when they play live, has a real knack for twisting a phrase into and out of shape. In spirit, if not in sound, these smiley kids also capture something of the flavor of the so called heyday of Athens, Georgia new wave pop circa '80/'81. Those of you who don't know about this are not advised to read a book by some guy that writes for the *Creative Loafing*. As for Big Fish, I do wish they would stop playing at the abhorrent Point all the time. (no address on this one!)—G.T.

**The Biggest Square Thing: *A Square Thing's Prerogative* (Butt Rag 7" E.P.)** My favorite 7" of 1990 is this three song deal from the duo of Sue Garner and Ruth Peyser. I actually like this better than Garner's better known group Fish And Roses, although it is a similar jazzy, funky experimental rock concoction. Of course, Sue is also in the Shams, who don't resemble the Biggest Square Thing in much of any way. Peyser used to play in a Lost reefs, band called Bump, whose one E.P. is not so far from this one either. Her other current project is something called the Same. Garner and Peyser both play guitar and sing on this record. They are accompanied on side one by George Cartwright on saxophones, Mike Sappol on tapes, and Jim (Bump) Biederman on samples and synthesizers. None of these guys are allowed to get out of hand, so this is still a fairly sparse recording. What the males do add fits in perfectly well. (from Butt Rag, POB 14724, Chicago, IL, 60614, USA)—G.T.

**Biota: *Tumble* (Cuneiform/Recommended CD)** A major departure from previous Memonist/ Biota releases is documented on this compact disc, though the basic approach is much the same. There is nothing I know to compare this to. A technologically more advanced Savage Republic is the best thing I can come up with. Strangely, *Tumble* is guitar music. But it is guitar music and a lot more. Six members of Biota (plus two guest musicians) play a large array of instruments. William Sharp does most of the "processing," which involves taking some of Biota's nicer musical elements and throwing them into a blender with rocks and mud. This music is pretty but deformed. This is what people who like Nick Cave's latest record ought to be listening to. (from 387 Wandsworth Rd., London, SW8, 2JL, U.K.)—G.T.

**Blowhole: *Guerilla Jazz* (Big Body Parts cassette)** Wow! This one smokes. It is jazz only by dramatic neologism, but the feeling is here. Blowhole is another project of Jeph Jerman (Hands To, Big Joye, etc.), and it is one of the nastiest knocks my noggin has received in a while. Jerman takes a bad notion and beats it

and beats it till it lies lifeless on the pavement. Most of the sixteen or so "songs" on the cassette have nothing to do with subtle or pretty or good music, but there is not much I'd rather abuse myself with than this noise. (from Jerman at POB 9813, Colorado Springs, CO, 80933—0813, USA)—G.T.

**Blue Green Gods: Sudden Death** (Jettison 7" E.P.) Better than the Doll Squad, not as good as Freedom Puff, somewhere in that wide weird world in between, I can't decide exactly where, you'll find the Blue Green Gods. They are certainly worth a listen. (from POB 2873, Durham, NC, 27715, USA)—G.T.

**Borbetomagus: "The Original Chirping Chicken"/"Choking Olga"** (Butt Rag 7") This is only the second 7" from these music assailants, who have previously blessed this planet with something like 13 full length LPs of their wonderfully foul musical vomit. Their previous single came out in 1981 and was a bizarre shared effort with a band called Mary and the Immaculates. Thanks to the wise folks from Butt Rag, we now have this bite-sized portion of

Borbetomagus noise, which documents two distinct halves of their charming schizo personality. "Chicken" shows the boys in a (sort of) mellow mood, laying low, letting Donald Miller get a few "ticks" in. I don't know what the title is supposed to refer to. It sounds more like "thirty men drag a dying Rhinoceros up Ponce De Leon at rush hour" than anything to do with chickens, but I'm not complaining about it. "Olga" wastes no time m diving head first into full-throttle, free improv punishment. Those who enter here, abandon all hope, for you are damned to experience musical death and recreation. (from POB 1, 14724, Chicago, IL, 60614, USA)—G.T.

**Borbetomagus: Snuff Jazz** (Agaric L.P.) Musical terrorism reaches maximum levels on this scorching from Jim, Don, and Donald, three nice guys who will destroy you and your entire family with five minutes of their brutal fun and games. Snuff Jazz is more like an hour's worth of the Borbetomagus gang at their blazing best. Recorded live in '88 and '89 at ABC No Rio and DC Space, these two sides show how this band commands the world of total chaos and destruction music with an iron fist. All three of our musical mass murderers are in top form. Donald Miller is especially good on the delicious ABC side. This is the past, present and future of music gone so wrong it is all right

unknown on these shores. Public Bath records out of Madison, Wisconsin is here to teach stupid arrogant Americans about Japanese punk noise. For no more than it will cost you to get the latest slop seven inch from Sub Pop you can tune into the latest sounds from Japan. The best evidence of Japanese noise supremacy is the Boredoms. They also bridge a gap I've been hedging throughout this review. Some of you have perhaps been thinking: "punk and noise are not the same thing!" As is often the case some of you are all wrong. The best punk and the best noise is the stuff that you can't decide what it is. One of the best punk bands of the last decade was Einstürzende Neubauten. Try the

seminal L.P. *Kollaps* for proof. The Boredoms don't sound at all like Neubauten, but they are like that because their music is hard to define and appeals to both crowds. What other punk band has a recent record available from RRRRecords? What other RRR band has an album on Shimmy Disc? The Sub Pop singles club is probably just around the corner for these weirdos. Aside from their hard to find EP *Anal*, this 45 is the best thing I've heard from the Boredoms, so far: two perfectly fucked songs out of nowhere that plainly and simply destroy music as it ought to be destroyed. This is one of my favorite singles from 1990 that didn't come from K records. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI, 53701, USA)—G.T.

**Brief Weeds: A Very Generous Portrait** (K 7") Somewhere between Chad & Jeremy/Herman's Hermitis type British invasion and Nickki Sudden's warblings falls (with a thud) this sissy-assed pop outfit. They are perhaps more original than that makes them sound, but I choke on the term "original" in this context. There are those who are always choking on it. There's something about this record that makes me like

it, although there's something about it that makes me want to smash it against the wall. The big standout, "The River Song (dub)" is dub done up K style, as scary as that sounds and good. (from POB 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507, USA)—G.T.

**Cake Kitchen: Time Flowing Backwards** (Homestead L.P.) This trio specializes in their own flowery pop dribble that I find myself liking for no good reason. Akin to the Chills and the Verlaines, Cake Kitchen abandoned the edgy off-kilter POV of ex-Xpressway labelmates for a smooth and creamy lowalt folkrockpop. Graeme Jefferies' songs cut through to the heart but do so without using sharp objects or pointy things. So we have a



Dairy Queen Empire photo by C. Verene

again. (from Route One, Box 26, Haring Avenue, Sparkill, NY, 10976, USA)—G.T.

**Boredoms: "Fuanfida!"/"Michida!"** (Public Bath 7") I suppose by now everyone has noticed the Japanese have taken over the world. Part of that world most of you probably forgot is the world of punkrock noise. The Japanese have taken over that stuff too. A lot of the best hard noise and punk rock of recent years (Hijo Kaidan, Hanatarash, Null, Yximalloo, Zeni Geva, etc.) has emerged from Japan. The problem is that records by all the above freaks remain generally hard to find. When you do find them you have to spend lots of already depleted American bucks in order to obtain them. So Japanese noise has remained largely

record about as heavy as, say, the Kinks' *Face to Face*. Exceptions to the rules: "Walking Over Texas" is an oddball screwed up rocker worthy of some weirdos like the Crucifucks or Tragic Mulatto. "One + One = One" is a grainy layered cake with funny swirls of recorder noise, and a viola and guitar sawing a love note to John Cates—"The circle is still unbroken." "Machines" is up to its naked ass in feedback harmonies which makes it very satisfactory to this particular palate. (from POB 800, Rockville Centre, NY, 11571-0800, USA)—G.T.

Cannanes: *A Love Affair With Nature* (Feel Good All Over L.P.) I had already paid \$13 for the imported maroon vinyl version of this when I received a promotional copy from FGAO of the white American edition. I wasn't particularly upset because this lowtech pop is likable enough I don't mind having more than one copy around the house. It is the kind of thing someone like me is probably not supposed to like but actually does like very much. It's a hook laced Beat Happening with funny accents, but saying the Cannanes sound like Beat Happening is like saying Buffalo Springfield and the Byrds sound the same. Whatever you think this sounds like, it is a lovely noise you'll be humming all the way home. (from POB 8428, Chicago, IL, 60614, USA)—G.T.

Caroline Rainbow: *I'm Armed With Qts. of Blood* (L.P.) The second fucking L.P. from the West Coast's best band armed not only with blood but used Q-tips, hair, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and snot, but the place where this record is happening is in your dumb head. Their first L.P. was an amazing mess of unfathomably beautiful music and sickness, but sounds tame next to this one. Perhaps it is my imagination but the recording quality seems to have improved, making diving head first into this puke music an easier thing to do. If there is anybody in the music world today that's doing more to reinvent rock 'n' roll, country 'n' western, and rhythm 'n' blues into a hybrid noise beast, I want to know who they are. Caroline sees things their own way. They play music in their own way too. Listening to their music is more like a religious experience than any ordinary act of hearing. Follow the instructions on the insert carefully upon first opening the record and you will find yourself turning into a different sort of human being. Silly things like memory and time and the day in day out routine you are stuck in, will cease to matter. Like the members of Caroline you will start to see things differently. You will become one with the planet. Earthquakes will not phase you. The twentieth century will turn into the sixteenth century. Caroline Rainbow is the one way. Save the earth today—listen to *I'm Armed With Qts. of Blood*. (c/o Subterranean Records, POB 2930, Berkeley, CA, 94702, USA)—G.T.

Charlie Collins & John Jasnock: *Dynamite*

(BIT cassette) Dynamite is the right name for this explosively beautiful improvised music. These two Sheffield players chase each other around a musical obstacle course, making up the rules of the game as they run. Collins blows a nice one, but it is Jasnock that I keep my ears tuned to. His rhythmic, jazz wrought style is just about the coolest thing to emerge out of improvland since those Borbeto boys put bells together. John grinds away at six strings kind of like you might be able to guess who, but seems to have his own way of building songs in the air. Collins keeps up remarkably well, and when he takes the lead the music stays at an exciting pitch. Most of the time they are on top of each other, caught up in a whirlwind of the moment. Musical formulas get tossed around and mashed out of shape so fast they are incomprehensible. One minute there is a trace of New Orleans blues, the next an Hawaiian serenade, then a yodelling mountain song. Sax and guitar never sounded better. Like all of the tapes from BIT, this one has great music on it. (from 45, Hadfield St., Sheffield S6, 3RR, England)—G.T.

Coo Coo Rockin Time: *Coo Coo Party Time* (50,000,000,000 Watts L.P.) I have long suspected David Fair of being the real brains behind Half Japanese, so I looked forward to this release with piqued interest. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered Coo Coo Rockin Time to be little more than NRBQ on Kramer. David Fair actually sounds pretty good, kind of like Tav Falco, if he got really really drunk and forgot to drawl. The thing that really drags this thing down is the band. They are just too good. David Fair deserves a back up band that really sucks. Some of these songs like "Oldsmobile Girl Magnet" and "Plenty of Room on the Radio" could be amazing if he had a shitty band. This is still a lot better than something like *Music To Strip By*, which mostly bores yours truly. Coo Coo Rockin Time have a really good sense of rock 'n' roll history. The songs are straight out of 50s R&B. An instrumental called "Spank the Bullies" is really keen. The words are likewise smart. My favorite: "Put Records Back in the Record Store." (from 5721 S.E. Laguna Ave., Stuart, FL, 34997, USA)—G.T.

Copernicus: *Null* (Nevermore C.D.) This independent mammoth certainly manages to get some good reviews. The liner notes to this his fourth release, are sprinkled with press belches like: "Compelling," "Riveting," "A Masterpiece," from *Option, Rockpool, and Ear* respectively. Longtime LowLife devotees (Howdy to both of you!) might remember I have usually not been quite so superlative writing about this guy's works. Looking back at LL numbers 6, 8, and 12 we find "overbearing," "preposterous," and "pompous bombast." Perhaps I shouldn't be so willing to dismiss a self-made original like Mr. Smalkowski

(Copernicus to you, bud), but I just can't take this con man sitting still. I'm willing to believe Joe Copernicus is a legitimate eccentric, and I have a hard time thinking of anything to liken this whole mess to. Some music reviewer like me might call it a cross between Frank Zappa and Herb Albert without being far off the mark. His poetry falls somewhere between Ginsberg and Richard Harris. His delivery is all his own, but I'll take Opal Foxx over this dumb cluck any day. Those unfamiliar with Copernicus are probably thinking this guy sounds pretty interesting, and you are absolutely right. But somehow being interesting, being not quite like anything else, being a lone rider out there on the edge of the "music industry," sometimes doesn't make something enjoyable or worth repeated listening. Where this mysterious grey area of objective credibility falls is something I have a hard time pinpointing. Nevertheless, listening to Copernicus is something five years of practice has not taught me to appreciate. "Touch" is the sixteen minute opus that closes Null, perhaps defining the recording, perhaps, just filling up a lot of space. Conceptually, at least it is an interesting experiment. Copernicus, who is credited with production on much of his work, has taken two distinct recordings and joined them together into this unsavory soup. The resulting collage of colliding musics is interesting to follow and conveniently diagramed in the liner notes. There simply is nothing about the piece to get involved with, and I find myself wanting to read about Richard Nixon in the N edition of the *World Book* encyclopedia that I acquired somewhere when I listen to this song. Though I wouldn't want to run across Copernicus in a bad mood in a dark alley, on vinyl or, shit, compact disc I just don't believe in his anger. (POB 170150, Brooklyn, NY, 11217, USA)—G.T.

Costes: *Lung Farts* (CD) Costes the Poop Sadist is the vilest, sickest, piss on everything decent and sound in memory. His ex-buddies Psycodrama could once match this level of odious delivery, but these days those guys have really softened up. Surely, Bret Kerby (néf Gator) and Costes are the two strangest men alive. Still, the last time I checked Kerby's outrage and outrageousness had taken a back seat to wife, fam, kids, etc. With G.G. Allin locked safely away and Benjamin transformed safely into Opal Foxx, Costes is left the undisputed king of the underground, just like he wanted. This CD is nonstop nausea of the ears. One offensive work of genius follows another. Altogether this is sixty-five minutes worth of terrible beauty that might make you sick, or wake you up from the daydream you are living, or cause you to make angry rude comments outside my door if you are my neighbors. This is a masterpiece of filth and a real fart in the face of CD technology. (from France)—G.T.

Cop Shoot Cop: *Consumer Revolt* (Circuit

L.P.) This is NYC noisierock from the same basic "school of thought" (ie: pool of filth) as folks like Rat At Rat R, and more recently Railroad Jerk. The music is abrasive, jerky, and bent out of shape. There is nothing particularly subtle about their beat their senseless approach. But these guys have two basses and samples and no guitar, which makes a sonic difference from other stuff like this most of you could name. Cop Shoot Cop plays rock music as original and contemporary as rock gets in early 1991. Although there is only so much you can do with your hands tied behind your back, some artists have done their greatest work in prison. (from POB 67, Merrick, NY, 11566, USA)—G.T.

**Crawling With Tarts: AA Redbox Pahoeoe** (ASP cassette) There is something ritualistic and narcotic about much of the work of Suzanne Dycus and Michael Gendreau. Here they've teamed up with drone noise guys Cliff



Judy Dunaway and Evan Gallagher

Neighbors and dAS (Deathranch and Big City Orchestra) for some improvised primal noise. This is the sound genre I carry around in my head so it feels good coming back at me from two speakers. I think it is an ambient dance music almost any contemporary town dweller might want to dig into. (from 633 Cleveland St. #4, Oakland, CA, 94606-1006, USA)—G.T.

**Dairy Queen Empire: N Is For Knowledge** (cassette) Longtime Atlanta postpunk teenagers DQE are back in a big big way. Grace, Christopher and Zak are older now and have gone through some changes. It is no surprise, then, this cassette is a far cry from their early rough and ready cassette releases. Over the years all three DQE members have done a bunch of other things. Grace and Zak played together in the notorious, ill-fated Nature Protein Biscuit. Zak started his own tape label, Bangaway, and played in something called Greige Travail with his friend Justin Hughes.

Grace played in the remarkably strange Shrinking Violets with Jan. She also started publishing a series of comic book/tracts, distributed through Bangaway. Christopher likewise played in some bands I can't remember. Eventually the three of them got back together to record some new material. Compared to the stuff they used to send us around the time they made their live debut at the 2nd Destroy All Music festival in 1986, this sounds like ABBA. Just for reference they have included two old DQE songs ("I Hate" and "Down"), that certainly deserve to be heard again. The other eight songs were recorded Jan. & May of '90 and feature singer/songwriter Grace Braun as never heard before. Her new songs are pop tunes that will "cleave to you like molasses." But they are otherworldly, destroyed pop tunes. The music holds together and stays in my tape deck by never quite coming together in the first place, by being screwed up in all the right places. Grace, Christopher, and Zak all play a variety of instruments and the sound is filled out with additional musicians (Justin Hughes, Marty Matteson, and producer Zodi). All this gives the band a rich, eclectic sound not unlike a better Mekons. Some of these songs ("Funny Thing," "Cleave," "Carnival") would shine through any setting and gleam all the more in this fine presentation. The moldy oldy "Down" proves that Grace has been throwing

together songs of this nature and quality for years already. The one real oddball in the batch is the other recycled old DQE song, "I Hate," which shows a side of Christopher and a side of the band that's obviously being suppressed these days but aches to show itself, a screaming punk rock voice in the tradition of the Sex Pistols and Meat & Glass. This tape is great and it doesn't cost very much. They've already sold over 500 copies! (from Christopher Verene, 1854 N. Decatur NE, Atlanta, GA, 30307, USA)—G.T.

**Dairy Queen Empire: Live In Richmond** (Thigh High Bootleg cassette) Some number of months ago somebody glued up a poster in Emory Village near where I work that depicted a cartoon elephant followed diligently by a cartoon shit-sweeping man. On the elephant's butt were the letters "DQE." On the man's back it said "LowLife." OK. So here's where that becomes reality. This tape features Grace Braun

on guitar and vocals, accompanied by Justin Hughes (of Greige Travail fame) on fancier guitar and very low key vocals. There's no Christopher Verene or Zak Sitter. I suppose "live" means lo-fi recording as opposed to bigtime four-track studio. This is the loudest thing we've heard from Grace in a while, but nevertheless, she is irresistible and grand. "Psychic Dream," "Pallet On the Floor" and "Dirt Floor" are all great songs and well worth the dozens of pennies it might cost you to obtain them. Write your president and demand that he make Frohmayer give these people some money today. (from Bangaway)—G.T.

**Dead C: "Hell Is Love Now"/"Bone"** (Siltbreeze 7") This little bastard contains two samples of some of the finest antirock/unrock our sickly planet has to offer in nineteen hundred and ninety-one. "Hell" is a relatively catchy number that strains the whole concept of 4/4 without failing to sing the blues. "Bone" sounds more like a self conscious art exercise, but don't believe that means it is not also punk. Write the Dead C at 16 Bemica St., Koputai, Port Chalmers, New Zealand. Write Siltbreeze records at POB 53297, Philadelphia, PA., 19105, USA.—G.T.

**De Fabriek (Artware CD)** What we have here is one long track, though there are title listings and distinctive song-like forms that float by amidst all kinds of human and inhuman artifacts. The eponymous release is a 74 minute sound collage of samples and electronics, not a seamless "work," but an oozing, messy thing with lumps and gaping holes all over the place. According to the package notes de Fabriek (from the Netherlands) has been at it since '77, with a changing lineup revolving around unnamed core members. I've never heard anything else they've done but this CD is an intelligently produced collection of non-musical music. (from Artware Products, Donna Klemm, Tausnstr, 63 b, 6200 Wiesbaden, Germany)—G.T.

**Didjits: "Headless"/"Give It Back"** (Touch & Go 7") I read on the cover of some fine publication that Alice In Chains, whatever that is, is "a blast of sonic morphia," whatever that is... I'm not sure what this has to do with the new single by the Didjits, but I thought I'd mention it. When friendly guys at record stores told Marc Moore that this new record was in stock, Marc felt bad because he had no intention of buying it. I think he also probably felt a little bit proud, which is better than being proud that our stupid government is flexing its muscles, pounding away at Iraq on the other side of the world as I write. This band just seems like another dumb rock band, but considering the choice in covering the Dickies, these guys must likewise be proud to be dumb. And again that's better than the form pride has been taking lately around these parts. I'm not

sorry to have this record, but, then again, I got it free in the mail, a very different thing from buying it in a store. Would I have bought it in the store otherwise? Probably not, but if I did buy it, it would be because I saw the very fetching picture sleeve (a huge



## F A T

leaf on one side and "FUCK THE PIGS" on the other) that has as little to do with the songs on the inside as most of the stuff in this review has to do with describing them, so I figure we're even. (from POB 25520, Chicago, IL, 60625, USA)—G.T.

**Diddjts: Full Nelson Reilly** (Touch & Go L.P.) "The war is over," and hot on the heels of the above is this full length L.P. of hyper funny rock and roll. "Headless" is included here, along with eleven other smashing numbers with the usual mixture of venom and Marx Brothers yuks. Again there's a cover. This time it's Devo's "Mr. DNA." There is definitely something weird going on here. Best lyric: "I wanna be the lead singer for the Fal/l wanna have gold records wall to wall/ I'm taking off my clothes on stage/I'll be like Mark E. Smith someday/All the old men look at me/I'm thinking of you Mark/I'm thinking of you." These guys are better than 92.5% of the bands out there today playing similar blistering crunchy rock music, which means this record is recommended to LowLife readers that want it. (from POB 25520, Chicago, IL, 60625, USA)—G.T.

**Dim Stars** (Ecstatic Peace 3 7") A more appropriately named outfit than this one I can't recall, a real waste of your time and mine. There might be some people out there who like this, but I'm not too sure the guys who put it out are among them. (distributed by Forced Exposure)—G.T.

**Thomas Dimuzio: Headlock** (Generations

Unlimited L.P.) Generation Unlimited has released a bunch of records that all stay well within the confines of electronic music, while still managing to be creative and interesting. This particular release by technical wizard, cassette veteran, Dimuzio, is their most enjoyable release to date. With a dizzying array of synthesizers, samplers, and electronics at hand, the artist has pieced together a collection of "songs" that vary from windy ambience to hard pounding noise. You will not find anything offensively musical on this record, but you will find a real diversity of a kind you probably expect to hear from songwriters, not sound painters. (from 199 Strathmore #5, Brighton, MA, 02135, USA)—G.T.

**Dirt: "Cleft On The Chin, Devil Within"/ "Booger"** (Worry Bird Disk 7") The ghost of Ian Curtis looms heavily over the lives of thousands of masacred high school and college students, so I supposed we will always be plagued by records like this. The drums are programmed in a way that they almost sound like they were played by a living and breathing human, but the guitars are so laden with space whoosh effects they might as well be coming out of a Macintosh computer. And, if you've ever thought about slashing your wrists all over your black bondage outfit, this warbling puffbag of a singer is the perfect complement to your final evening. Somebody should play these kids a Stooges record, so they know what real music sounds like. (from POB 95485, Atlanta, GA, 30347, USA)—Marc Moore

**Dirt: She-Male Sugarpussy — Drill the Minx**

lineup featuring Deanna Gonzalez on drums instead of their current drum basher Allen Page. There is something to be said for prepuberty, but when it's gone it's gone. This is gritty punk rock at its best. Guitarnoise splatters red all over your clean white dress—an early ejaculation maybe. These days we have a bigger, meaner, better Dirt, but the Dirt of this record is a thing that will live on unchanged, unchallenged in the black vinyl of this disc, and it is a nice little Dirt you can have fun with while you wait for another Dirt record. (write Dirt c/o POB 427, Avondale Estates, GA, 30002, USA)—G.T.

**Doll Squad: "Kiss Me I'm Poisonous"/ "In Your Pants"/ "Advice"** (Worry Bird 7") To you poor misinformed non-Atlanta residents, here's the scoop. The Doll Squad is an all female rock band, that, contrary to what I think their executive producer DTL once said, is quite capable of holding instruments while on stage performing original music, sprinkled with covers like "Chinese Rocks" and "I Wanna Be Your Dog." They had been playing out, paying dues, building their audience, etc., for at least six months when good old David decided to put out their well deserved first 7 inch, which we have at hand here. I see The Moon was opening for Railroad Jerk and the Wolverton Brothers at the Chameleon Club on a Tuesday night just in time for a celebration of this event. So I bought the record, enlarged the photo off the front and made 11"x17" posters that said "Doll Squad Record Release Party with I See The Moon." At the bottom in

(Tupelo L.P.) Lots of intrigue surrounds the release of this long player by Atlanta's loudest and proudest. It took a while to come into existence (although not as long as this issue of LowLife), and has lost some of the impact a timely release would bring with it. The music was recorded a while ago and has the group at prepubescence with a

small type it said "Doll Squad will not be appearing." On a Monday morning before I went to work I put up twelve posters on North Highland and North Avenue near my apartment building. That evening when I returned from work, I got a call from Katy Talbott, bassist for the Squad, asking if I knew anything about the "giant posters with the huge photo of us" that she said were "all over town." I confessed to my crime, and she said they thought "it was really weird" and asked me to please not put up any more of them. I promised her I would not. An hour later David T. Lindsay himself called to tell me he was not mad and, in fact, thought it was funny, and

my posters, besides a couple down at WREK and one on the door at Klang. When our show rolled around neither David T. Lindsay nor any members of the Doll Squad bothered to show up, which I thought was the least they could do for us, after all we'd done for them. I guess that's show business. (from POB 95485, Atlanta, GA, 30347, USA)—G.T.

**Geoff Dugan: *The Aluminum Hallway*** (cassette) Geoff Dugan's latest tape (his first as a NYC resident) is up to his usual high standards of quality. I suppose Geoff is what Brian Eno called a non-musician, which has more to do with the approach artists take to

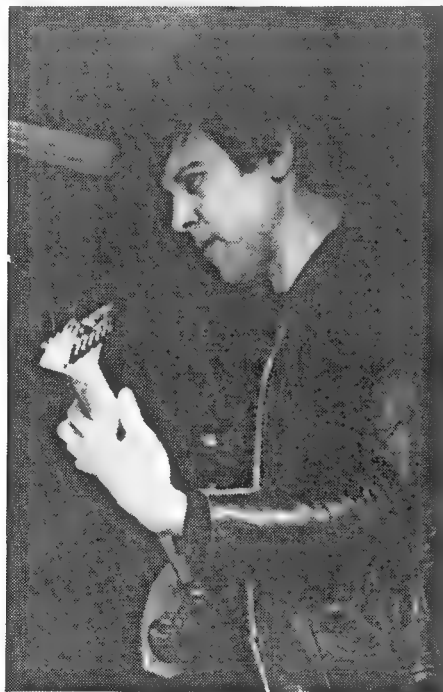
producing their music than whether or not they are trained musicians. Take for example the above reviewed Doll Squad.

The total musical training undertaken by those five young women probably doesn't amount to more than a week. Yet, their approach to music making hardly constitutes the kind of naive, creative techniques Eno was envisioning when he employed the term "non-musician" to describe himself. Instead of taking advantage of their lack of knowledge about their instruments to explore uncharted territory, the Squad struggle to ape musical

been working on since the demise of his more extroverted industrial/performance project (w/ "Sick" Mic McGovern), Becky's Army, years ago. Dugan's struggle is the struggle of an artist trying to find a language of his own in this age of mass duplication. It is the same basic struggle of any real artist. Dugan's compositions are built like houses, layer after layer, brick by brick, much like the architecture of his imagery. Since he doesn't use blueprints and his music is not subject to housing codes, his sound is free to roam around in a way not granted to buildings. The longer pieces, "Gone," "In Periphery," and "Unfortunate Architecture," have a premodern/postmodern ritual visionary quality, not unlike some Nurse With Wound/Current 93 stuff. If you've never heard anything by those industrial legends in their own minds, don't feel bad about it. Just send your cash to Geoff. He probably also accepts trades. Write to him at 329 East 12th St. #7, N.Y., NY, 10003, USA.—G.T.

**Judy Dunaway (Lost CD)** This is a fine recording by a great performer. Judy Dunaway is a true original who fits nicely with the "tradition" they are building over at Lost records. Working with the singer/songwriter/guitarist on this release is a whole mess of New York City types including: Rick Brown, Cinnie Cole, Evan Gallagher, Sue Garner, Sue Ann Harkey, Michael Lytle, Chris Nelson, and Mike Sappol. Although this relates to other oddball NYC noise, no wave and improvisation, Dunaway's Mississippi roots are likewise pretty obvious. The songs are a nice blend of traditional music and schlock and improvisation. I would prefer this to be a record, but I guess it is only a compact disc. I suppose the times really are changing. It is an uglier change than I ever expected. (from 346 E. 13th St. #7, New York, NY, 10003, USA)—G.T.

**Entre Vifs: *L'Ordre Par Le Bruit* (CD)** Hey, this is what I call good music, with state of the art CD packaging as well. Who says white folks don't know shit about samples? What's going on here is really not all that different from the best (read: noisiest) parts of Public Enemy, and N.W.A. The difference is Entre Vifs has scrapped the (blues based) beat, not to mention the rap, in favor of dense, relentless cacophony. The result is a record, I mean, CD that most people will associate more with *Metal Machine Music* than with Grandmaster Flash. What I'm trying to counter with here is an idea for a worldview in which it *Takes A Nation Of Millions and Dedicated to Peter Kurten* stand side by side against a common enemy that comes in all colors and has many disguises. From this perspective classifications like "rap" and "concrete music" don't mean much. In fact, they are nothing if not tools used to divide and



Rudolf Grey photo by Catherine Ceresole/Bach

the Doll Squad were mad at him because he thought it was funny. He explained to me that they were "just girls," a fact that was fairly obvious to me all along, and he told me the posters that were "all over Virginia-Highland" were "great publicity for us." And that was the end of the whole sordid affair. Within 24 hours all the posters were gone. I kept my promise to Katy and didn't put up any more of

cliches already done to death by musical giants like the New York Dolls. On the other hand, Geoff Dugan may well be capable of picking up a guitar and wanking out a few rock riffs. Fortunately for us, he chooses to take a more daring and interesting path. Obviously, *The Aluminum Hallway*, has nothing to do with rock music. In fact, Dugan is exploring the same sort of ritualistic, experimental brain music he has

conquer our revolutionary forces. If this all sounds like a crock of shit, that is because it probably is, but it is the only crock of shit I personally can live with. As for the music on this CD, it is snap, crackle, pop, destroy your eardrums at maximum volume, as recommended in the liner notes. Entre Vifs abandon entertainment for a radical musical agenda. The operators (not players!) are armed with slogans to back up their sound processes: "The Silence of John Cale is Overrated" or "What is named Chaos is a superior form of Organization." All of which amounts to the same old more industrial than thou pile of shit/cliches, "creation = destruction," blah blah blah, that anybody that's been paying attention has heard lots of times before. What nobody is doing is claiming Entre Vifs has stumbled onto something "new." Those who will appreciate this CD probably know who you are. The rest of you are likewise encouraged to give it a try, but you have been warned. (from *Artware*)—G.T.

**Fat: *Hü*** (These L.P.) This is a trio that plays something that resembles rock but a slithering, future is now rock that will fool you everytime, like if Tunnus decided to play rock music. I think these are songs as opposed to improvisations but the influence of free improvisation seems to be hanging around here certainly. There are lots of treatments, sampled noise, and other tricky newfangled kinds of musical things but that doesn't keep Fat from sounding loud and tough and capable of producing some real tension on a stage somewhere. These folks sound like top notch players that aren't afraid of resorting to utter racket. The horns of Borbetomagus make a couple of appearances, sounding oddly like someone finally really did capture them on tape, resulting in a canned, processed, Borbetolike substance that is still quite nice. Fat would fit in nicely in a record collection that includes stuff like OWT, Carbon, and Last Exit. This is simply fine, challenging music that deserves to become a standard. (from *Recommended Distribution*, 387 Wandsworth Rd., London, SW8 2JL, UK.)—G.T.

**Feetpackets: "Listen, Feetpackets!"** (Discus C.D.) Feetpackets is a fourteen piece group, based out of Sheffield, England. The recording at hand dates from 1988. The seven or ten pieces (I'm confused by the track listings) here are all compositions and range from the very messy, "The Rough With The Smooth" to an almost songlike thing called "Fanfare For Mick." Most of the musicians on this disc are new to me, but they are obviously a talented bunch. Skits superstar vocalist Linda Lee Welch is one of the two woman singers in Feetpackets but she is too often buried by this huge group. Bandleader Mick Beck is an impressive soloist, but on this recording, it really is the band that matters. After

Feetpackets, the big band will never be the same again. (from 9 Broomhall Rd., Sheffield, 210 2DN, England)—G.T.

**Paul Flaherty/Randall Colbourne/Stephen Scholz: *Impact*** (Cadence Jazz L.P.) Colbourne and Flaherty are two guys who play drums and sax respectively. Together they produce hard, fast jazz improvisation. Sometimes they play with this other guy named Scholz whose sizzling violin blends nicely with their bewitching potion. This record is about fifty/fifty duo and trio. Either way this noise is fine by me. When Scholz joins this swinging cacophony tends to swing further out of line. When he's not around, Flaherty and Colbourne find their more subtle grooves. But the music never gets boring, whether they are playing it for hot or cold or something somewhere in between. (from Cadence Building, Redwood, NY, 13679, USA)—G.T.

**Fluid Mask: *Flesh Sparks To The Beat*** (Vision 12" E.P.) I try to avoid the pitfalls of rock criticism, of fanzine writing as a form, but over and over I find myself stumbling into them. Certainly, I sometimes enjoy myself in there. There are those who would dismiss the whole form with some good arguments, but zinespeak is the only language I know anymore. When I was in college I used to write about Milton, Keats and Samuel Beckett, but slowly, like a creeping disease Iggy, Pere Ubu, and the Ramones took over. Now I don't even remember who Keats was. Which doesn't really bring us to this E.P. by Switzerland's Fluid Mask, but somehow I'm supposed to get around to it. Like most of their labelmates, Fluid Mask don't sound anything like any of their labelmates. They play a heavy, rhythmic brand of rock music, that is related to ugly sounding musical schools like Eurodisco and industrial. Fluid Mask does this without trying to fit into anybody's preconceived notions, and they do it with a lot of credibility. They also have a double E.P. on Vision, but this newer release impresses me more. It could fit into the Wax Trax roster but would make all those Wax Trax bands look pale and emaciated by comparison. Fluid Mask is almost too loud, too scary, too intense, too all those silly adjectives used by other zine idiots to describe everything from the Cure to Halo of Flies. Fluid Mask is really good at what they do, and I recommend them before almost any contemporary band they will probably get compared to. (from POB 568, CH-4005, Basel, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Food: *Life is Food*** (Bangaway/Jolbert cassette) So this Nature Protein Biscuit, Greige Travail, now Dairy Queen Empire guy Justin Hughes has a "side project," other than a life to live. He calls it Food, and it is a far cry from any of the above, which isn't necessarily a bad place to be. There is noise, improvisation and plenty of fucking around. On top of all that are some things that resemble songs, where Justin bares his heart and soul. The tape I received leans pretty heavily

toward the noise, but I suppose I asked for it—I once compared his songs to one of the many bad Atlanta rock acts now signed to major labels. This doesn't mean that if you write to Justin asking for a tape you'll get the same one I received. According to the cover scribbling: "each tape is unique/no copying or dubbing involved." So what you get will be an original piece of art, an objectively personalized slice of Justine's just for you. Justin is one of these new breed renaissance men like Mark E. or Lou Barlow, so you might as well abandon preconceptions right now unless you're looking to get them smashed. "All proceeds go to making fish fly." (from 547 Earlam College, Richmond, IN, 47374)—G.T.

**Gallio, Ostrowski, Zimmerlin: *Certainty Sympathy*** (Percaso Production CD) This is one of the most unusual and worthy things I've heard on compact disc. *Certainty Sympathy* is a composition by saxophonist Christoph Gallio in conjunction with cellist Alfred Zimmerlin and electronics operator Mathew Ostrowski. The piece is captured on this recording in one forty minute track. There is no skipping around like CD listeners have become accustomed to doing. You must start at the beginning and listen as long as you last, which means I've heard the first half of the composition a lot more than I've heard the last half. *Certainty Sympathy* sounds like an improvisational piece that has been chopped into little pieces and divided by samples of birds and orgasmic female voices and shortwave noise and silence, but I've heard this performed live and they reproduce the whole composition amazingly closely. It is tempting to trace the whole of modern music from Ellington and Stravinsky to Mingus and Stockhausen, etc., etc., through this music. But it would be a waste of time. This is clever, humorous, smart music. The recorded version functions alternately as background sound or the focus of the listener's full attention, depending upon the effort one puts toward it. (from RecRec Recommended, Magnusstrasse 5, CH-8004, Zurich, Switzerland or Percaso Production, Haldenstrasse 13, CH-8055, Zurich, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Gallio, Ostrowski, Zimmerlin: *Birds & Dogs*** (Percaso mini CD) Contrary to the above, this tiny little round flat thing has plenty of tracks (19 to be exact) chopping up its 13:05 worth of playing time. Musically it follows closely after *Certainty Sympathy*, though it might be entirely improvised. These three players complement and conflict with each other in just the right proportions. Ostrowski is the unclear razors edge to Zimmerlin's classic smooth lines and Gallio's bopping melodies. But nothing is all that black and white with these guys. Gallio and Zimmerlin are the kind of musicians that are



capable of going way in and out at any time. Ostrowski has a handle on his samples and his notes that allows him to blend in or scream out loud at will. Because it is easier to swallow, *Birds & Dogs* is probably a better place to start with this trio than the longer, earlier work. And I'm trying to suggest that almost everyone should be starting someplace with this outfit. (from same as above)—G.T.

#### Garlic Boys: *Band With Big Members*

(Public Bath 7" E.P.) Japan's answer to Poison Idea is no match for America's fatso heroes. Nice try anyway, Boys. They pretty much stick to the tried and tired clichés of speed metal or fast punk or whatever it is you call this trash. At least one of their songs, "The Way Of The Fat Boy," really manages to rise up out of the ghetto of the genre, being at one time half parody, half wholehearted honest statement, and half punk history lesson. (Yeah I know, but when you're this fat there are way more than two halves to go around.) Other songs like "Mad Asshole" and "Smeagman" try for grossout humor, but come across just real silly. But when you look and sound like these guys being real silly is probably the smartest move to make. Coming out of a grand tradition that includes the likes of the Gizmos, the Dictators, and, of course, more contemporary folks like Anti-Seen and Poison Idea, the Garlic Boys have some deep rooted standards to maintain, and I wish them the best of luck. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI, 53701, USA)—G.T.

Genbaku Onanies: *Forward Command Post* (Public Bath 7" E.P.) Supposedly a legendary Japanese punk band that's been around for a long time, Genbaku Onanies could easily have been conceived in Public Bath's family basement, for all I know about them. For some reason this sounded pretty good to me when I listened to it once. They seem closer to early Dischord bands like Teen Idles and Youth Brigade than most contemporary U.S. punk bands would allow themselves to be. Nevertheless, I'm pretty sure that at least two of these four tracks include an "Oi! Oi! Oi!" chorus. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI, 53701, USA)—G.T.

George Bush Has AIDS: "Old People"/"David's Solo"/"Ape" (Oh My God It's A Siamese Twin cassette) Here's a mystery item from two Atlanta youths (David and John), that is a blast of fresh air next to most of the junk American indie rock has churned out this past year. This is punk rock as it was meant to be, recalling such legendary breakthrough punkrock moments as the Meatmen, the first Ramones album, the unforgettable Meat & Glass cassette, and early DQE. Of the three "tunes" on this tape, the best and, uh, most developed is the one called "Old People," with great lyrics like: "you get all wrinkled

and your tits sag like shit" and "what point is there in living after you get forty." Nothing new, perhaps, but then again there is not much new about being young or growing old. Anyway, it beats the hell out of "My Generation." "David's Solo" is G.B.H.A.'s attempt at experimental music. This is pre-Garage noise, minus the boring predictability that access to almost any modern technology or expensive equipment inevitably gives the would be experimenter. These guys are funny and (I suppose) real young and obnoxious as hell, but I think their tape is great stuff. Send cash and recording contract offers to 1895 Meredith Dr., Atlanta, GA, 30318, USA.—G.T.

Gibson Bros: *The Man Who Loved Couch Dancing* (Homestead L.P.) This is wonderfully skewed blues shit much in the manner of the final Pussycat record, so it shouldn't surprise anybody that Jon Spencer and Cristina appear on the live half of this. Through the "magic of sampling," *Dolemite*, *Droll*, *Dylanisms*, "Hipshake," hip-hop and all varieties of southern fried stupidity and chaos come together under one big roof for the biggest hoodwink of the season. If you are like me you are probably asking when exactly was it that these guys got so good? I haven't got a clue, but I'm happy for them. The record at hand is better rock and roll than most of the stuff now hanging around the hip indie rock seven inch circuit. It achieves this by making a mockery of the form. (from POB 800, Rockville Centre, NY, 11471-0800, USA)—G.T.

Glamour Twins: *Summer Dreams Ripped At The Seams* (Bangaway cassette) This is not as amazing as the latest DQE cassette, although it is certainly a fascinating collection of spontaneous actions, songs, and jam fests by all three DQE members along with a variety of others. The twins themselves are Jan Ollis, formerly half of the famous singing duo called the Shrinking Violets, and DQE drummer/singer/multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Chris Verene. Grace Braun and Zak Sitter also appear, as well as both members of Flap, Justin Hughes of Greige Travail, and other friends of all these people. But Chris and/or Jan appear on (almost) every track. Chris and Jan also act as MCs between songs. This is a really good collection ranging from noisy punk to dreamy pop to indescribably weird moments. The high point for me is Grace's song "Wishing," but there are many more fine moments. There isn't room here to fully explore the riches offered on this early 1991 release, but I heartily recommend it to everyone in the world. (from 1854 North Decatur Rd., Atlanta, GA, 30307, USA)—G.T.

Rudolph Grey: "Implosion 73"/"Transformation" (New Alliance 7") This clear snotgreen seven inch contains some fine guitar

chaos, that almost lets me forget how sick of guitars I really am. Grey puts his instrument through an audio torture chamber, a just punishment for the goddamned thing. This guitarist is one of the only NYC experimenters of the "no wave" period who hasn't abandoned the instrument in favor of samplers or something else, and I'm not sure whether I want to dismiss him for being totally stuck in the musical dark ages or honor him for persistence in the face of a hopeless cause. Being on the cutting edge of a bankrupted musical form, gives Grey the advantage of being fawned by guitar dudes like T. Moore and the guys over at New Alliance. How far that actually gets him in the big cruel world of fame and glory is something to be considered elsewhere. When it comes to listening to what this record actually sounds like, I am bowled over every time by the noisy little bastard. If Elliott Sharp is the Ornette Coleman of no wave, then Rudolph Grey is Albert Ayler. His relationship with his instrument is one based on some weird spirituality rather than just dexterity and innovation. I don't think this means that we can expect either to find his body floating in the East River or for him to start worrying out loud about god and stuff. What it does mean is that enjoying Grey's music is more of an instinctive experience than an intellectual one. (Which also doesn't mean that only eggheads and musical scholars like Elliott Sharp and Ornette Coleman.) What it might mean is that people who like Mudhoney are just as likely to enjoy this record as people who like Nicolas Collins. Anyway, I like it. (from POB 1389, Lawndale, CA, 90260, USA)—G.T.

Rudolph Grey: *Mask of Light* (New Alliance/Ecstatic Peace L.P.) The greatest free jazz L.P. of 1991, maybe ever, is this one that features two baby boom age white guys (Grey and Jim Sauter) and a godsend drummer (Rashed Ali). These three have produced a record that squeezes virtually everything else in the field and harkens back to *Ascension* and *Bells*, not to mention *Machine Gun* or *Nipples*. As usual, Jim Sauter pretty much takes control of things on the long title track that takes up all of side one. Nevertheless, Grey's heroic free guitar playing is the perfect counter to Sauter's massive sax roar. Love Circle member Alan Lick contributes low level sonic guitar grind to "Flaming Angels." This should not be confused with any band that is signed to Gefin records, though one such person has their name on the back cover. This inclusion probably has less to do with actual production work than it does with attempting to get people to buy this album. But not to worry, no such concessions have been made with the music inside. (from POB 1389, Lawndale, CA, 90260, USA)—G.T.

Grifters: "Disfigurehead"/"Need You!"

"Reason Enough?" "How Long?" (Doink 7") For some reason I really like all four of these punk/pop/garage/blues songs by this previously unheard of band from Memphis, hometown of Elvis and Witt Mills. Each of these tunes swings in its own noisy little way, so that it's hard to characterize this stuff, though there's nothing particularly ground breaking about anything here. Nice cover photograph wraps up this swell product that several people reading this would probably be very happy to own if they only knew what was good for them. (from 1572 Overton Park #11, Memphis, TN, 38112, USA)—G.T.

**Halo of Flies: *Big Mod Hate Trip*** (Amphetamine Reptile 7") Amerikkka's premiere antiwomp rockers pull out the old mod routine for two completely fucked doses of rock noise. Like most of this band's grizzly music, these two songs are filled with all kinds of badass hate-filled riffs from the paws of the Haze, but what these two exercises in Jam styled power pop have that most of their stuff doesn't are these crazy things called hooks. You have been warned. (from 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Halo of Flies: *Music For Insect Minds*** (Amphetamine Reptile CD) If Halo of Flies on CD sounds like something of a redundancy to you, you're not alone. That AmRep big boss man's own grimy outfit is the best American band on Amphetamine Reptile is something seldom claimed by mainstream U.S. fanboys, but this CD goes the long distance toward proving the contention. In descending order the rest of the batch would go something like: Boss Hog, Cows, Surgery, Venig, Helmet, Helios Creed, Tar, and God Bullies. It is worth noting that I would hardly miss the last four in a world without them. Perhaps I'm overstating the degree to which Halo of Flies gets short changed. Hazelmeyer certainly has never had any trouble turning over his Halo products, which probably explains why a lot more effort goes into the promotion of the other bands on his label. The Cows, Surgery, Helmet, Helios Creed, and the God Bullies have all had extensive enough tours that they made it down to Georgia. To my knowledge, Halo of Flies has never come close. All of those other bands have also had one or more full length albums on Amphetamine Reptile. Halo of Flies has had none. In fact, most of the records they've put out (with the exception, perhaps, of the two Twin Tone 12 inches) have been pretty hard to come by. With the release of this CD, which includes about 95% of their vinyl output, Halo of Flies is driven out of self imposed obscurity. In the bright light of compact disc technology this ugly post-retro punk rock sounds great. Arranged roughly in reverse order of release, the collection shows that the trio has not faded

over its five years of recorded existence. New smart bombs like "Tired & Cold" are every bit as enticing as early smoldering ruins like "Rubber Room." In the end (of the review not the band) what makes Halo of Flies so good is not the usual innovation or experimentation you'd expect to read about in these pages. What makes them good is the ability to produce on-target, hate-driven, art-bashing punk-noise with steadfast yet drunken precision. (from 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Hanatarash: 3 (RRR L.P.)** The third rock 'em sock 'em album from the Gods of heavy metal industrial noise is kind of mellow compared to number two, but then again it would have been hard for them to get much heavier. As before, Hanatarash use terror and hate, appropriation and detournement to lay waste to Western anti-culture like a retarded Godzilla descending on a papier mâché Tokyo. This is both a parody of early industrial noise stuff and a reaffirmation of its power. While you probably weren't supposed to laugh at early records by P16.D4 or Whitehouse or whoever, you are a boob if you don't laugh at Hanatarash shit. This noise is not exactly subtle but it goes through a bunch of shifts in direction over the course of the L.P., so the listener doesn't get bored or run from the room screaming. The high point/low point of 3 is "Live Shit Action '88" where it sounds like these guys are killing members of the audience much to the delight of everyone else in attendance. (from RRRRecords, 151 Paige St., Lowell, MA, 01852, USA)—G.T.

**Happy Flowers: *Lasterday I Was Been Bad*** (Homestead L.P.) Those of you who've heard their previous releases, and thought all their shit sounds the same, need to think again. This is either one of the worst records I heard all year or one of the best. A lot of

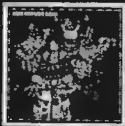
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**THE PURPLE OUTSIDE** - *Mythic Love*. Screaming Tree, Gary Low, Gnarzy, wrote, sang and played all the instruments except drums which he left to the men of the band. Patricia, on this debut, it weaves into the nother regions of psychedelia with massive guitar overdrive. NAR 000 (LP/CA \$7.50, CD \$13.99)

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times the difference between best and worst is not much. Without all that mediocre grey stuff in between best and worst might finally unite. Obviously, there is nothing mediocre about the Happy Flowers. Those same obnoxious brats of earlier Happy Flowers records are teenagers now, well maybe they're only twelve, and now they like Kiss and Motorhead. Yes, you got it, these days Happy Flowers rock! This is probably what Half Japanese sounded like a few years before their *Calling All Girls* E.P. came out. Well, it's what they would have liked to sound like, if they knew how to play their instruments, owned electric guitars, Marshall amps, etc. As a matter of fact, it's probably also what you and I would have sounded like at the same age given the same set of circumstances. Of course, the people who made this record are not eight or twelve or even sixteen. Forget about that. This is art, not real life. Honestly, this and Sebadoh are just about the only interesting things Homestead has to offer circa Winter 90/91. (from POB 800, Rockville Centre, N.Y., NY, 11571, USA)—G.T.

**Helios Creed: "The Warming"/"Your Spaceman"** (Amphetamine Reptile 7") If you played an old scratched up copy of a Black Sabbath record on a really shitty stereo with broken speakers, a loose turntable belt, and a dust packed needle, it might not sound much like the new Helios Creed record, but you could have fun telling your dumb friends that was what it really was. (from 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Helmet: "Unsung"/"Your Head"** (Amphetamine Reptile 7") Although this is an incredibly silly band that plays by all the rules of the game to get ahead in an Albinized (thanks to *Ethan Buckler for the use of that term*) world, I know at least one fellow who jumps all over the place, like he's going to wet himself, every time their tacky first L.P. is on the turntable. Compared to everything else they've done "Unsung" is virtually tender, so maybe this is the Helmet equivalent of a ballad. "Your Head" is a typical headbanger that reminds me that Helmet is the most "new wave" Amphetamine Reptile band. By virtue of this genre distinction you'll gather these guys are nowhere near as good as their label buddies Surgery. (from 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**High Risk Group: "Daddy Rolex"/"Empty Hands"** (Harriet 7") The A-side is hard pounding, on target, shit-faced noisy rock that blows away everybody else in the neighborhood. The B-side is an airier, poppier brew with nice melodic violin. This one's all right. (from POB 649, Cambridge,

MA, 02238, USA)—G.T.

**Holy Rollers: As Is** (Discord L.P.) A good record by a great band, this is not nearly so powerful as the Rollers can be in the live setting. We caught them at their Atlanta gig in some Buckhead yuppie pit where they produced a mighty storm like Discord honesty meeting K purity. Or something like that. Anyway this record doesn't capture all of that, though it is a nice collection of songs that don't follow any strict musical party lines, managing to sound funky and noisy and catchy one after another. At times you'd think they were heavy metal. At other times they sound like nothing else but a Discord band, which is not such a bad thing really, when you think about it. There is also a seven inch I like even better than this. (from 3819 Beecher St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20007, USA)—G.T.

**Paul Hoskin and Murray Reams: *Slave Ship*** (Sound and Fury cassette) Though it doesn't exactly capture their high quality live performance, *Slave Ship* gets as close as magnetic tape ever gets to reproducing the beauty of improvisation. Drummer Reams and reed player Hoskin are the epitome of balance and tension and mutual understanding in the cold, living minute of improvisation. Their music strives for the essence of the moment, the root of the sound. They shun all the gimmicks, all the accoutrements for something... and they don't know what that something is... something they can define as real. When it is happening nothing beats the power of this duo. Because you can't take Hoskin and Reams, the human beings, home with you and put them on a shelf, you'll have to settle for something like this cassette as a surrogate chunk. (from POB 10331, Greensboro, N.C., 27404, USA)—G.T.

**Honeymoon Killers: "Kansas City Milkman"/"Nothin'"** (Insipid 7") NYC's Honeymoon Killers haven't exactly progressed since their first self produced L.P. through numerous other records and record labels and band members. Likewise, there is no chance anybody is going to confuse recent efforts like this one with that first vinyl experiment. Without really changing much they have gone from being mere dabblers in garage grunge rock to being close to king/queen of the form. I'm well aware of the fact that this makes them sound about as interesting to most of us as saying that they rock hard. All I can do is assure you that for some weird reason I like this record a lot. (from POB E155, St. James, 2000, N.S.W., Australia)—G.T.

**Icky Boyfriends: "Frank's Mom"/"Muffin"/"Sex Trash"/"Jolene"** (C&P 7") These guys are pretty goofy (for instance the sleeve says this was recorded in "Rocktober 1990"), but there's something about their dumb humorous brand of rocknroll that I find appealing. It is pretty close to my idea of what punk rock is supposed to be, although that might not be the sound these

jackers are striving for. The boy singing on "Sex Trash" sounds a lot like one of the voices of Chris Verene, if that tells you anything. The Boyfriends also remind me of Florida's great (well, maybe that's stretching it) Broken Talent. (After I wrote that it occurred to me that there was actually a recording of Broken Talent, one cut on one of those Chemical Imbalance 7"s, so I listened to it. It doesn't sound much like these schmucks or at all as I remembered seeing/hearing them live a long time ago. It doesn't sound so, uh, "great" either). There's nothing particularly great about Icky Boyfriends, but great is not something I demand of every 7" that wanders along. I give it a seven and a half. It's got a good beat. You can dance to it. (from 109 Minna St., S.F., CA, 94105, USA)—G.T.

**If, Bwana: *Wah Yu Wan*** (Generations Unlimited L.P.) Al Margolis is the cassette mobster who runs the Sound of Pig cassette label, if not most of North America. If, Bwana is Al's "band." Over the years If, Bwana has been responsible for numerous tape releases. The few of those that I have managed to hear show a diverse, eclectic approach to electronics and experimentation. *Wah Yu Wan* is If, Bwana's first record that I know of, and the music is as interesting as always. Al plays synthesizers, sampler, violin, french horn, piano, clarinet, tapes and other stuff. He is accompanied by some other people, especially effectively by Fred Lonberg-Holm on cello and Brian Charles on digeridoo. The music Al and his gang produce is rather indescribable, perhaps a post-nuclear classical music for the mutant of sophisticated tastes. If I had to pick a favorite of the seven pieces here it would be "Op. 4, Ch. 4." With its tortured operatic vocals, screechy strings, and insane repetitive keyboards, this scary beast eats itself alive from the inside. "3 Men And A Baby" is such a dense, spine twisting workout it reminds me of the Borbetomagus/Voice Crack record condensed into one mean two minute song. "We Are Not A. Mused," with its low murmuring space tones, sounds like the soundtrack to the movie they are filming at the beginning of *Wim Wenders' The State of Things*. (A 1950s noir look at future shock through postmodern 1960s eyes). They never do get around to finishing that movie. Fortunately for us, If, Bwana finished this record. Just in time for vinyl to become obsolete, the Cassette man puts out a record. Write to Sound of Pig at POB 150022, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY, 11215, USA or write to Generation Unlimited at POB 540, Marlborough, MA, 01752, USA.—G.T.

**Infamous Menagerie: "Toast"/"Spit"** (Big Flaming Ego 7") A mysterious Seattle outfit

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that holds "Fall of the House of Grunge" fests, Infamous Menagerie manages to exist in the trendy 1991 climate without catering to any particular pop/rock schools of thought. I couldn't think of anything this record "sounds like." I could say it doesn't sound like Joy Division, Modern English, Sonic Youth or the Jesus and Mary Chain, though if you played it in the middle of a radio set that included those four bands it probably wouldn't sound too out of place. I like "Toast," which for some reason sounds a lot like a song I liked on the first L.P. by Nice Strong Arm, better than "Spit." Icicle guitar, big drum crack, wailing voices, and moody bass lines melt together into a not especially generic pile of radio conscious pop noise that is not too hard, not very sweet, not terribly catchy, and not something that I can get particularly excited about, but I'm probably the most jaded bastard you'll meet this week, so why are you listening to me? (from POB 718, Seattle, WA, 98111, USA)—G.T.

**Jandek: *Somebody In The Snow*** (Corwood L.P.) A lot of redundant words have passed over the subject at hand in the name of criticism, but Jandek records keep appearing and balking at critique. Inadequate, am I, to wrap up this art, explain it to you or "get it

right" in any sense. Yet, I'm caught in its web, certainly and forever. The only object that is left to point the latest Jandek record at is another Jandek record. Rounded up into one big heap, all the Jandek records at once amount to an almost impenetrable thing. Once inside this thing you will not emerge unscathed. I call this music folk music not because it is acoustic or balladic or "folksy," but because it represents a unique local community of music that is by contemporary standards untainted, spontaneous and self sustaining. I will not try to convince anybody Jandek is not a part of the music world at large. Jandek, whoever he/she/they is/are... Jandek is as much a part of the historic moment as say Michael Jackson, Lou Reed, Miles Davis or the Jody Grind. Like these famous people and everyone else, Jandek is subject to the perversions of media, information, and the whole contemporary dilemma, but his/her/their music is just about the closest thing to pure unadulterated expression I know about, certainly the closest thing to "folk art" within the realm of indie music. *Somebody In The Snow* is just another piece in the giant Jandek puzzle. But like every fragment of the picture it is a demanding, invigorating, tragic, visionary work, with overtones both physical and spiritual, sensual and metaphysical. The Jandek oeuvre is obviously a

work of passionate faith, and thus on "Come Through With A Smile," "Nancy" sings: "changes are coming," but uncertainty and horror are never far away. "Bring It In A Manger" is one of the most terrifying two minutes ever put to vinyl, the Christmas story retold like it really was/is. Record after record Jandek has built a body of work that outshines anybody else I can think of who has put out a comparable amount of material. Hold up the Rolling Stones or Bret Hart and there's no contest. Stranger still, Jandek just keeps getting better and better, and *Somebody In The Snow* may well be the best yet. (from POB 15375, Houston, Tx., 77220, USA)—G.T.

**Jandek: *One Foot In The North*** (Corwood L.P.) To the untrained ear, a Jandek in the 90s might sound pretty much like a Jandek in the 80s. However, Jandek is an artist who refuses to sit still in a world that moves along relentlessly. A quick glimpse at the twenty L.P.s by this extraordinary Texas original might lead some people to conclude that he's some misplaced Borges character, tirelessly rereleasing the same record over and over, stubbornly attempting to perfect his art without changing anything. Indeed, Jandek is an artist with singular vision, and he resists

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Maybe I sent it to another reviewer who failed to turn in a review. But now I can't remember exactly what it was like. I think it was kind of like this one, which means it is a poke in the ribs, mess of a record, lots of people should be forced to listen to twenty four hours a day for a long time. Write to Small Tools Tradition at POB 8005, Suite 239, Boulder, CO, 80906-8005, USA. And Contact Little Fyodor at POB 973, Boulder, CO, 80306, USA.—G.T.

**Barbara Manning: "Don't Let It Bring You Down?" "Haze is Free" (Forced Exposure 7")** Is this supposed to be funny or is it supposed to be good? I don't think it qualifies as either. Neil Young has a great song called "Don't Let It Bring You Down," but this isn't it. Barbara Manning sure does have a cutesy voice for someone who talks about crud on her private parts. I can't believe the two men who put out this record couldn't think of something more interesting to release since all they do to listen to records, make homophobic jokes, and think of ways to ridicule Mike McGonigal. This record is boring. Why don't you buy the new *Schaden 7"* instead? (from POB 1611, Waltham, MA, 02254, USA)—Marc Moore

**Man's On Control: Spiderbox** (Perimeter cassette) I was tempted to dup over this tape before I even listened to it. The cover shows a picture of a little boy with a gun in his mouth. The lyrics to a song called "Sugar Cookie" are printed on the tape insert, and they are so dumb and pretentious that Christian Death looks like "Woolly Bully" in comparison. Fortunately, Spiderbox is not as bad as all this would suggest. Side one has some subtle and interesting guitar noodling backed by cool, simple drumming. Mitch Foy's ranting and whining is on top, and he sounds disconcertingly similar to Martin Short's pointy-headed SCTV character, Ed Grimley. Side Two has typical tape collage/manipulation bullshit, a boring acoustic instrumental, a great song called "Gas," which is a bunch of screaming and bashing. If you really want to know what this tape sounds like, I understand that Ed Grimley has his own Saturday morning cartoon show. (from POB 28882, Atlanta, GA, 30358, USA)—Marc Moore

**Master/Slave Relationship: Being Led Around By the Tongue** (MSR CD) I received this compact disc in the mail with a note from Debbie Jaffe, requesting that the reviewer please listen to the release before writing a review. O.K. Debbie, no problem. Debbie's note is, I guess, in reference to Lisa "Suckdog" Carver's review of Jaffe's L.P. in LL #15. That review apparently bothered Debbie and several of her friends. (See letters section, this issue.) I never sent Lisa a copy of the M.S.R. record or asked her to review it. So Lisa perhaps never did hear Debbie's record. I read somewhere where she said she had never

heard Debbie's music, but rereading Lisa's review it sounds like she listened to it pretty closely. Check this out: "She says on top of lame-ass synthe: 'your cock was so big...' Anyway, I always listen, at least superficially, to records I get in the mail, and if I choose to write about them, I usually listen to them over and over. This was the case with that M.S.R. album Lisa reviewed (*Lubricious Love*) and I also reviewed in LL #13 after Ron Lessard sent me a copy, making it one of the few (maybe the only) record(s) to get reviewed twice in LowLife. Nevertheless, it doesn't really surprise me that Debbie didn't like Lisa's review. It was hardly what you'd call a fair or objective piece of writing, but the one I wrote was no more complimentary. I printed Lisa's because I thought it was funny. Same goes for her letter. As for Lisa Carver the human being, contrary to what her detractors say, I have always found her to be intelligent and likable, though perhaps not the most talented or honest person in the "biz." She's certainly not the incorrigible stupid bitch where she is made out to be. The one time we met, we got along just fine. As for Debbie Jaffe, I don't know her and have never corresponded or talked with her at all. However, I think I've heard at least two of her cassettes, in addition to the *Lubricious Love* L.P. and this new CD, but I have never been too impressed by what I have heard. *Being Led Around By the Tongue* is a big step forward, at least as far as technology and technique are concerned, though the themes and ideas are closely tied to previous releases. The music on this CD is quite diverse, managing to achieve a number of different sounds. I honestly hope no one is insulted when I describe the music as rhythmic industrial music. What I mean by this is that Debbie Jaffe employs electronics, synthesizers, tapes and other noisy effects over hard, uneven, presumably electronically produced dance rhythms. On top of all that she does her spoken word thing. Again I don't mean to insult anyone, but know I will, by saying that Jaffe's work reminds me a lot of Lydia Lunch's spoken word stuff. Jaffe's stuff is supposed to be hard hitting and real, just like Lydia's. For me, what they do comes across just like pornography written by men, employing all the same kinds of stereotypes. Jaffe's lyrics/poetry/whatever are full of references and asides that critique (or at least reveal something new about) the form pornography. But it is easy enough to ignore the critique and just experience the CD, cassette or record as pornography with music. This might not be the case with a Master/Slave Relationship live presentation, but I am under the impression that this is basically a studio project. Seeing Lydia Lunch stand up in front of a bunch of punkrock dickheads and deliver her unstoppable diatribe face to face was quite a different experience from listening to one of her spoken word pieces on record or cassette. It was a living feminist critique even the dumbest fucking man could not ignore. I'm sure it didn't do a lot of good, but I don't think

any one particular piece of art is ever going to have much of a real effect on anything in the "real world." Probably neither Lunch nor Jaffe would call themselves feminist or call what they do art, but I wouldn't swear by it. Leaving Lydia Lunch to the side and returning to our main theme here, I am going to do the irresistible and ridiculous thing I've been dodging throughout this "review" and attempt to compare the works of Lisa Carver and Debbie Jaffe. Carver certainly would call what she does art. In so doing, I don't think she always necessarily critiques the concept of art, but somehow her belief in her work as art turns it into art that is that much more interesting. Although I'm sure Lisa is the average feminist's worst nightmare, I don't know whether she considers herself a feminist or not. Probably not. Her work often has feminist messages, but 95% of her audience can't see them and instead just think what an embarrassment she is to her sex or what a great fuck she would be, if she wasn't such a slut. Unlike Jaffe, Carver doesn't know shit about technology or music, but she does have something to say. Her approach is basically primitive, employing whatever she can get her hands on, which might sometimes include even, lame-ass synthe. Jaffe might also be called primitive or at least technoprimitive, but her finished product is obviously much more polished than anything Lisa has ever done. Lisa's words do not address any particular sociosexual theme but a myriad of vague themes that are always contradicting and eradicating each other. Debbie Jaffe and Lisa Carver are as different as cold running water and the tip of a lit cigarette, but what both of them do is "shocking" and different from what anybody else in the "underground" is doing. Both Lisa and Debbie are women who use sexuality as a theme and a tool. It was inevitable that someday their names would come up side by side. Lisa was probably just trying to hurry up the process by writing all that mean stuff about Debbie. She was also certainly trying to get more attention drawn to herself. That's the way she is, and that's another difference between Debbie and Lisa. Debbie just does what she does and probably doesn't have any illusions about getting rich and famous from her work with Master/Slave Relationship. I think Lisa firmly believes she can get famous being Lisa Suckdog, and she will do anything that will help her to achieve this goal. This might be the thing about Lisa that offends a lot of people. Debbie might sing: "make me feel like a fucking slut" or "I'll spread my assecks so you can see everything" or "I want so bad to piss in your fucking mouth." But she does not sell her cassettes after shows with no clothes on or charge guys 25¢ for a peek at her pussy in the back of record stores. Lisa Carver has done these things, and that's what I call art! Nevertheless, what Debbie Jaffe does is

unique and brave, and I wouldn't want to discourage any open minded person from listening to her new CD. Write to POB 191211, S.F., CA, 94119-1211, USA.—G.T.

**The Meatmen: *Crippled Children Suck*** (Touch & Go L.P.) I remember this guy named Vern, who had a great trick where he would bite beer cans in half. He would do it on command. All you had to do was ask. I also remember Vern because he was the only true Meatmen fan I knew. At the time I thought they were too stupid and juvenile for me, but now that I'm old and the Meatmen don't exist anymore, things seem different. The Meatmen are a cultural moment worth preserving. That is exactly what the good folks at Touch & Go have done with this new L.P., that brings together the classic Meatmen E.P. of the same name with a bunch of previously unreleased live tracks and demos. What do you say about this band, six or more years after the fact? They are the Meatmen and you still suck! If you are among the unfortunate and confused many who never got into the hilarious punkrock garbage that was the Meatmen, here is your chance. Note these brilliant titles: "TSOL Are Sissies," "Blow Me Jah," "I'm Glad I'm Not A Girl," "Tooling For Anus," and the list goes on and on. I wonder whatever became of Vern. He probably got old too and now probably thinks the Meatmen were silly and adolescent. Life is really shitty sometimes, you know. (from POB 25520, Chicago, IL, 60625, USA)—G.T.

**Mecca Normal: *Cardboard Box House of Love* (K 7")** One of my favorite seven inch records of 1990 is this nifty pair of tunes. "Forlorn" is a bitter, intelligently poetic song, fashioned very much in the likeness of earlier Mecca Normal "protest" tunes like "More More More" and "Strong White Male." Jean Smith's vocals are as soulful as any white person in music today, despite the contrary fact that she reminds me of some weird cross between Joni Mitchell and Poly Styrene. David Lester's simple, tormented guitar playing is up to the task on the A-side here, as he delivers some of the nastiest sounds heard from him on record or tape. Both halves of Mecca Normal show a lot more restraint on "He Didn't Say." This one is a melancholy, haunting bit of pop folk. The guitar starts out acoustic and polite, but then a second guitar breaks in, noise bent and electric, through the gentleness. Write Mecca Normal at 304—1320 Salsbury Dr., Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5L 4B3. Write K records, cassettes, and compact discs from POB 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507, USA.—G.T.

**Mecca Normal: *Water Cuts My Hands*** (Matador/K.L.P.) Jean Smith sings songs about the pain of living in this fucked up world. Her words are so sincere, so cutting, so to the point, they leave the poor listener devastated and spent. This is not good time music, but there is

not much in the bad time world of rock I would rather waste my finite time listening to. David Lester's gutsy guitar is the perfect accompaniment to Smith's rock n roll poetics. His simple, bright like ice playing manages to play the role of an entire band. There is nothing else like Mecca Normal. There is nothing better. (write Mecca Normal at 304-1320 Salsbury Dr., Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5L 4B3)—G.T.

**Phil Milstein: *Tapeworm*** (50,000,000,000 Watts L.P.) Mr. Milstein was responsible for 1989's amazing *Pep Lester* double set of punk rock experimentation. In 1990 he was back again with this collection of tapeworm, some of which was originally used as parts of songs by the band Uzi. Nevertheless, this stuff stands up on its own. Phil's sound sources include sound effects records, phone messages, and cheap electronics. He has a homemade experimenter's ear for finding interesting sounds in unexpected places. His nonmusical skills are such that he makes music that is more interesting than the music 95% of the musicians in the world's are capable of making. This record is unusual and worth your dollars. (from 571 S.E. Laguna Ave., Stuart, FL, 34997-7828, USA)—G.T.

**Roscoe Mitchell: *Songs In The Wind*** (Vicio CD) I don't feel too weird describing Roscoe Mitchell as one of the world's great living musicians. As a soloist and member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and other groups, Mitchell has forged paths never trod by humankind. This latest disc-thing is further proof of the man's staying power. It is some of the noisiest honking I've heard from this woodwind player, but don't take that to mean this is pure sax caterwaul. It is actually one of the most beautiful recordings I've heard in ages. The kind of "beauty" I'm talking about is one that an untenderhearted fellow can stomach listening to, maybe even enjoy listening to. The title of this recording is obvious and self explanatory. A bunch of these songs are recorded in conjunction with Steve Sylvester (a guy described in the liner notes as an "inventor"). I'm not sure what it is that Sylvester invents, but he makes some cool sounds playing a bicycle powered wind instrument called the bull roarer. This is supposed to be a prehistoric Aborigine instrument, but some LowLife readers might know it from that Han Bennink solo record on FMP where he played everything including the bull roarer. In addition to this flautent instrument, Sylvester plays something called a wind wand. Mitchell gets somewhat more familiar backup on other cuts, including some subtle violin commotion by Vartan Manogian. There is even bass and drums on one song. But the show is pretty much in Mitchell's corner for most of the disc, especially on the nine minute solo soprano sax piece called "Purple Landscapes." This generically named song is a tantalizing display of Roscoe Mitchell's cool, generous style. (Les

Disques VICTO, C.P. 460 Victoriaville, Québec, Canada, G6P 6T3)—G.T.

**Monsieur Jean (Sextett): *Cassures And Inserts*** (For 4 Ears CD) Six Swiss musicians here convene to achieve a remarkable range of improvisational moods. The lineup is certainly different from the typical jazz or free improv grouping. Monsieur Jean was two drums, three strings, and an electronic manipulator. The percussionists (Jacques Widmer and Günter Müller) and the tape/computer guy (Andres Bosshard) also play together in another interesting band called Nachtluft, but it is MIDI-guitarman Richard Jean that gets his name up in lights. David Gattiker (cello) and Malys Im (contra-bass) also put this music into its own realm, giving it an uneasy, strange classical air. Nevertheless, Monsieur Jean with rabid determination step out of any category anyone is likely to want to put them in. *Cassures and Inserts* is not merely improvisation captured on disc. The listener is encouraged to have a hands on relationship with the composition. "Cassures" is one 27 minute piece that is divided by various tracks. The "Inserts" are twelve more tracks which CD programming ability allows listeners to (literally) insert into the larger piece. Of course, you can do this kind of rearranging with any CD, but the nature of the music and production gives the listener a composer's role they don't generally have. It is good someone is actually trying to make something out of the compact disc format rather than just swallowing it like a good consumer society member. This is music that is made to enjoy listening to as well as being made to do something with. (from Günter Müller, Steinechtweg 16, CH-4452 Itingen, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Morphogenesis: *Prochronisms*** (Pogus Productions L.P.) This is excellent improvised electronics akin to AMM, Voice Crack, and Mnemonics Orchestra, as far as results, if not process. Morphogenesis is a six man group, augmented here on one track by David Prescott and on another by Gen Ken Montgomery. The group employs a wide range of machines, gadgets, and musical instruments to achieve a rich array of sound. Turned up loud, this music commands attention. At a low volume it lays back and works on the subconscious. *Prochronisms* is one of the best electronic recordings that came out last year. It might well be impossible to find already, and that is too bad. (from 151 First Ave., #201, New York, NY, 10003, USA)—G.T.

**MX80: "15 Lauffs"/"Little Pony (Made Of Soap)"** (Forced Exposure 7") If there is one thing that a lot of people know about, it is rock and roll. This fact is one that rock writer types would like to keep secret. They want you to think only they know about rock and roll. Case in point: recently I was at the Masquerade (big

BY GRACE BRAUN  
OF DOE FOR THE LOWLIVE

BILL, OH, BILL...  
YOU'RE SO SEXY...

YOU DID SAY YOUR NAME  
WAS BILL, DIDNT YOU?

JIM SMITH



dumb rock hall with bad sound system and/or soundmen) and a guy I know says to me, "Hey, isn't this MX80?" So I listen and sure enough coming from said bad system is MX80 Sound, something from that *Subterranean Modern* comp., I think. Anyway, this knowledgeable guy and the Masquerade employed dj person were probably not aware of the *Forced Exposure* cover story or this accompanying subscriber giveaway 7" or the group's concurrent comeback/teatime. Yet, here both these people were grooving to vintage MX80, which is pretty cutting edge behavior for Atlantics. So everybody knows about MX80 Sound then, right? Wrong. But this is your chance to catch up. MX80 Sound made one really good L.P. called *Hard Attack*. That record, along with the *Big Hüs E.P.* that came before it, ought to give them a major slot in the true history of new wave/punk rock noise right alongside Pere Ubu, the Girls, Mars, etc. Unfortunately, their stuff on Ralph records that followed pales in comparison. I haven't heard anything they've done since *Crowd Control* in '81, but if this new record is any indication of what they've been up to, they really haven't changed much. Like everything I've ever heard by MX80 this single is good, but "15 Laffs" might as well be King Missile compared to classic split like "Tidal Wave." "Little Pony" is better. It certainly makes for a more respectable return to vinyl than anything Pere Ubu or Wire have done since their unfortunate emergence from the blackhole of the early to mid '80's. So we'll welcome MX80 back. We will not listen to what Jimmy or Byron or Glen have to say about them. We'll just listen to their new record and try to pretend we're 18 and it's 1978 and rock and roll is dead and there's a new monster on the horizon. Hey kid, wipe those tears off your face. This is a place of business. (from POB 9102, Waltham, MA, 02254, USA)—G.T.

**Nachtluft: Jikan To Kuukan** (For 4 Ears CD) Another excellent Swiss release, *Jikan To Kuukan* was actually recorded in Japan in 1989. Nachtluft is three European musicians: Andres Bosshard, Günter Müller, and Jacques Widmer. The four rather long pieces (13 to 20 minutes) are all improvised live. Müller and Widmer both primarily play percussion instruments (with Müller switching off on electronics sometimes). Bosshard "plays" (my words) "cassette machine, computer" (theirs). This instrumentation might have the potential of being dull and dry, but this is actually one of the four or five most interesting instances of recorded improvised music I've heard in the last couple of years. There are some horrendously noisy moments on this CD, and it's certainly not for just any four ears, but if you are smart it might be for yours. (from G.M. Steinechweg 16, CH-4452 Iltingen, Switzerland and distributed by Rec Rec

Distribution, Magnusst. 5, CH-8004 Zurich, Switzerland, 01 241 50 55)—G.T.

**The Nation of Ulysses: "The Sound of Young America"/"Channel 1 Ulysses"/"Atom Bomb"** (Diskord 7" E.P.) These days punk lives, oddly enough, right where it has lived for years. With bands like the Holy Rollers, Fugazi and the Nation of Ulysses, things are sounding better than ever over at the Discord house. Coming with a doctrine of belief that's a cross between Caroliner Rainbow and the Weather Underground, the thing that matters most about N.O.U. is how they rock or how they break rocks and make such beautifully noisy music in the process. This is sloppy but energetic punk rock with loud guitars, earnest/frantic voice, and an overall headfirst commitment that is nice to see in 1990 turning into 1991. It is high time for a new youth revolution in this country. It would do well to follow a band that sounds this good. These guys were wisely linked up with their West Coast spiritual brothers and sisters at K, so this has two addresses. (Write K at POB 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507, USA or write to Discord and the band at 3819 Beecher St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20007, USA)—G.T.

**Neon Christ: A Seven Inch Times Two** (F-King 2 7") Around 1984 or so, about the same time I started publishing LowLife, hardcore had pretty much shot its wad across the country, but here in Atlanta we had one of the best hardcore bands around and things seemed like they were just beginning to happen. Nothing much ever did happen and Neon Christ didn't last very long, but they did manage to release one excellent seven inch E.P., which to this day stands up fine next to all those early Discord records of a few years earlier. This two record reissue contains that record plus a second previously unreleased E.P., recorded a few months after the first record. A lot of this stuff ("Ashes To Ashes"/"Blind Patriot"/"Doom") sounds more relevant today than it did six years ago. Surprisingly enough, the stuff from the Neon Christ E.P. sounds musically fresher, more alive than a supposedly more mature song like "The Knife That Cuts So Deep" or their anti-war anthem "Ashes To Ashes" (heard previously on the *Peace* compilation). "Bad Influence" sounds as good today as something that was contemporary for me like "Brother James." This is more than a document of something that has gone by. This is a chance for a lot of people to catch up with something they missed. (from 641 East Morningside, Atlanta, GA, 30324, USA)—G.T.

**Nothing Painted Blue: The Bellyspeck E.P.** (Jupa 7") Not what you'd call an original piece of music, "Foundation Slips" is pure pop for people who forget easily. In the course of listening to this song once, Ellen and I thought of the Cure's first, the Jam's fifth, XTC, the Smiths, the Verlaines, the Soft Boys, the Cannanes, among other things. The pair of bastards on the flip side are another matter. "K For Karnival" is not a Dairy Queen Empire tribute, but rather a lustless bid for the affection of Calvin,

stupid but cool, and somehow O.K. "Let's Kiss" continues were "K" leaves off and proceeds not far beyond that. *The Bellyspeck E.P.* is just another dumb record, sure, but it is a dumb record that is smart enough to know how dumb it really is, and for some reason I think that means something. (from POB 1243, Upland, CA, 91786, USA)—G.T.

**Omolde Hatoba: "Surfin In U.F.O."/ "Mother IP"/"Gara"** (Public Bath 7" E.P.) Japanese rock music can surely be as boring as any rock music anywhere, but when Japanese rock music gets weird there's nothing else to compare it with. I could say that Omolde Hatoba sound like a cross between James Blood Ulmer, the Ventures, the Holy Modal Rounders and the Butthole Surfers and readers could puzzle over a concept as curious as that, but it would get me no closer to being able to convey to anyone what they actually sound like. This is something only the process of listening to the record will achieve, and listening to this record is something I would recommend. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI, 53701, USA)—G.T.

**Ed Osborn: Lennares** (Generations Unlimited cassette) You might call this Ambient music or Atmospheric music, but you probably wouldn't if you were someone who usually enjoyed music called Ambient or Atmospheric. On this tape Osborn employs several different methods to produce interesting electronic music. The two versions of "Trace Elements" are computer music pieces that take minimalism beyond minimalism. As the sounds build they fall apart, and these compositions literally decompose before the listener's ears. I find I enjoy "Trace Elements" (and the rest of this cassette) at a very low volume, so sound creeps in and out of awareness. "Landing Gear," a piece "constructed from filtered pink noise and digital delay" works much the same way. This is an edgy, sometimes barely audible noisecape. By comparison "Guitar Mechanical #1" is a lively upbeat composition. Here Osborn eschews the usual ways of playing guitar, choosing to not play guitar at all. Instead he picks up the pickups, turning the instrument into one big bulky contact microphone. This tape is one of the most interesting recordings of its kind I've heard in a while and one of the best cassette-only releases of 1990. (from POB 540, Marlborough, MA, 01752, USA)—G.T.

**Pain Teens: Born In Blood** (Trance L.P.) This is the third L.P. from this productive Houston group. Several interesting cassettes preceded those. This sounds rather different from those early experimentalism though they haven't really changed direction much. In fact, at least one piece, "Shotguns,"



appeared in a rawer form on their '87 release *Cahy*. The drum machine has been tossed out and replaced with real drums. (good) They've moved up the street to a real studio. (maybe) They are capable of doing Bowie covers. In the past they were capable of covering Black Sabbath. This is still the same band, and still likely to go several directions at once. They sound like about five different bands on *Born In Blood*. The one that plays songs like "The Basement" and "Pleasures of the Flesh" could maybe get signed to Sub Pop, if they tried. The one that plays "Lady of Flame" and "My Desire" has a much more fucked up approach to rock. The band that performs "Shotguns" and "Secret is Sickness" produces a scary mutant tapework with rhythms. Somehow all these bands are this one band called Pain Teens and they are the only rock band distributed by Silent records, the only tape network band distributed by Touch & Go, a true nineties crossover band. Write Trance Syndicate at POB 49771, Austin, TX, 78765, USA, or write the Teens at POB 35709, Houston, TX, 77235, USA.—G.T.

**The Pastels: "Different Drum"/"Empty House" (K 7)"** Here's a nice one from these sissy Brit "rockers" that fits in perfectly with the rest of the K catalog. The A-side is real cotton candy, managing to out wuss even the original. But if like me, you are sick of power,

intensity, and all that crapola rock critics like to blab about when discussing the latest turd the rock industry has shat, this will be a welcomed diversion. "Empty House" is actually a pretty interesting song with the band throwing a bit of sand into the pop music formula. Insane vocals and guitar tremolo slaps the listener up side the head, which keeps bobbing away senselessly. I listened to this song five times in a row without screaming and consider that quite an accomplishment for the band and me. (from POB 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507, USA)—G.T.

**Pavement: Demolition Plot J-7 (Drag City 7" E.P.)** Pavement is repetitious, droney, distorted, tuneful, nerd rock 'n' pop. That might not sound too good to some readers. "Rock" and "pop" are dirty words around these parts. And all those other words that come before them don't improve the situation much. However, for this listener Pavement is a good thing, pop like it ought to be, rock like it never was. This music still lives in the garage or the bedroom or somewhere a long way from any real studio situation, and that is a very healthy place to be. This is the kind of thing that will never be at home on puny CDs. Other bands that come to mind are the Swell Maps, Some Velvet Sidewalk, not much else... Pavement is just too good to keep secret any longer. This is their second self released E.P. Before long they're going to be bigger than Jesus. (from POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**Pavement: Perfect Sound Forever (Drag City 10")** This one should be retitled *Perfectly Wrong Forever*. There is something completely incorrect about Pavement that makes every awkward, miscalculated move they make splendidly right! Inexplicable indie winners in Pazz & Jop where other hopeless, groovy outsiders (Sebadah, Royal Trux, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Jandek) can't make a dent, Pavement is on the front line of the pop reassessment war. The sounds in these grooves suck me in over and over again just like old fashioned pop was supposed to do. Yet, there is something decidedly missing from the Pavement pop brew, something that makes you feel empty after it is over, something that gives you self knowledge, something that poisons when you want nourishment. If all that sounds a little scary, don't worry. It's just a record and a fuzzy, meandering, unfinished sounding record at that. It would be possible to say this record rocks harder than their previous two records, but I will not even bother. Obviously a 10" in '91 is a nice idea. (Note: about the same time this ten incher appeared a bunch of not so nice ten inchers arrived via Southern CA. Needless to go into further details.) (from POB 47687, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**Pavement: Exact Wording of Threat (Drag**



MECCA NORMAL: JEAN SMITH DANE LESTER  
photo by: JOE SNOW

City E.P.) Three more uneasy tracks from these tricky fellows, disguised as summer party rock. The press material that accompanied this one includes a list of words used to describe the Pavement sound: "lo fi, obscure, The Fall, noise, 'noise,' sloppy, Swell Maps, Velvets, mysterious, garage," also there are a smattering of photocopied reviews where most of the above are represented. Then there's the music in the grooves which manages to be Pavement's —to use a tired and frayed critic's fave, I bet, not often applied to this wickedly good band— most "straight ahead" effort to date. The problem is, as always, words just don't do it, especially, one hundred or less hastily typed by some know it all who gets all his records free in the mail. Pavement make the kind of songs you'll want to cling to as you collide through this miserable world on the way to the big pavement down below. Yet they'll crumble under your scrawny embrace and leave you wrapped up in yourself as always. You might as well look under a rock as look for warmth in the fleeting moment of songs. Pavement would probably like to remind you of that if they ever thought about it. (from POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**PBK: *Narcosis* (cassette)** This cassette network stalwart is slowly (and as surely as endless delay) building a personal sound genre, I would like to formally christen "assault ambience." Like *Crawling With Tarts* and a few others currently working in a similar vein, PBK is capable of breathing something lifelike into cold machinery sound. Nevertheless, cyborgs need not worry, there is nothing very organic about PBK sound. The process of trial and error that the artists endure is likely as close to live action as this stuff gets. His music to soothe your soul and batter your brain comes wrapped in an authentic piece of artwork (on canvass). (from 115 W. 33rd, San Bernardino, CA, 92405, USA)—G.T.

**Pegboy: "Field of Darkness"/"Walk On By" (Quarter Stick 7")** There's nothing very new going on here, but there is perhaps something that a lot of folks haven't gotten enough of yet. This is pop punk of the sort that harkens all the way back to "I Can't Explain," but will remind most of you of more recent stuff. These two bouncy tunes will have you up and stomping circles around the living room in no time flat. (write Pegboy at POB 528009, Chicago, IL, 60652-8009, USA)—G.T.

**Pleasure Heads: "Catholic Guilt"/"Foggy Notion" (Cubist Pop 7")** With passion, "Catholic Guilt" is 2.5 minutes of bad energy in K clothing. Ellen said "annoying, bratty, and shrill" but those sound like positive modifiers to me. I wonder why anyone would

expend so much wind toward this topic, if they don't "give a damn about your catholic guilt." But that's their business not mine. In this way they've got a lot in common with punkrock. The second side is a classy cover of a Velvets song that I never considered one of their shining moments. The tune is redressed for the 90s and looks pretty good in its nice new pressed suit. Nothing about this will do much to change the world other than to put more trash (several hundred pieces of round plastic) into it. But that's about all records can be expected to do, so don't worry too much about it. (from POB 7569, Pittsburgh, PA, 15213, USA)—G.T.

**Railroad Jerk: "Younger Than You"/"Ballad Of Jim White" (Matador 7")** True enough these guys are younger than me. They are also younger than bands out of the past they vaguely sound like (Rat At Rat R for instance). All of which is ok by me because Railroad Jerk, with their splintered blues brand of destruction, are exactly what I want to hear from a rock n roll band in 1991. The fact that they are exactly what I wanted to hear from a rock n roll band in 1981 should not enter into the discussion. (from 611 Broadway, Suite 712, NY, NY, 10012, USA)—G.T.

**Rat At Rat R (Sound League cassette)** Over eight or nine years these people have managed to squeeze out only three releases, but what Victor Poison-Tite and company have lacked in proficiency they have more than made up for in dedication to form. As important an ingredient in the development of this New York pile of shit noisy rock thing, as Sonic Youth or the Swans or anybody else you can think of, Rat At Rat R have never exactly been blessed with good deals. The reason Sonic Youth is famous and Rat At Rat R is basically unknown is simply the difference between good and bad business. This latest release is yet another example of how Rat At Rat R always goes wrong. "Distributed" by the recently defunct Rough Trade, this E.P.-sized item is practically unavailable in stores. I finally managed to find a cassette version, and I suppose it is also available in one or another more durable format. Anyhow, it certainly deserves to be. These six new songs (plus two noisy untitled fragments) are a big improvement over the disappointing though nicely named 1988 release *Stainless Steel/Free Dope For Cops N Kids E.P.* The 1985 debut L.P. *AmerSide* is still their masterpiece, but their new music is very much in the same twisted vein. This hard hitting rock pretty much makes a mockery of all those Wax Trax type "industrial" bands on the one side as well as those muddy SubPop/AmpRep types on the other side, but most of the people who listen to Godflesh or Ministry or Killing Joke or Helmet or Nirvana or the Cows or whatever will never get a chance to listen to Rat At Rat R's literature, creative loud rock noise. And that's a shame. (from who knows where!?)—G.T.

**Red Transistor: "Not Bite"/"We're Not**

**Crazy" (Ecstatic Peace 7")** I ran into my buddy Axl Rose at Wax and Facts when he was in town doing some promotional stops for the new G'n'R record. He didn't have much time to talk, but he did have time to give me a copy of this new single by one of the original no wave bands that Axl put out on his own label. Though you wouldn't know it from listening to his own band Axl still supports the underground stuff. Red Transistor didn't make it onto No New York, but they were pretty closely related to the bands that did. They were certainly making their own path, machete in hand, and don't lend themselves to easy random comparisons. "Not Bite" is the more interesting item, but both sides are worth getting this for. Rudolph Grey and Von Lmo have both gone on to make good noise elsewhere, but this is the place where you'll find them together. Axl also gave me a bootleg of his own band doing Georgia Satellites covers which fetched a nice price when I sold it at the record collectors show. (address unknown)—G.T.

**Rocket From The Tombs: *Life Stinks* (Jack Slack L.P. and 7")** Here's the first (relatively) widely available documentation of the band that curiously paved the way for both Pere Ubu and the Dead Boys. At various times featuring three future Boys and two future Ubus and a number of subspecies tunes of both, this is typical bootleg grade recordings of a band that I feel dumb calling "ahead of its time," so I will not even bother. I would like to say this is the missing link in mid 70s punk rock, the band that makes sense out of the whole cluttered chain of events, but Rocket From The Tombs is at best, a band on the way to becoming a great band, arguably two of them. These guys needed to break up and figure out what they really wanted to do. Obviously, several different conceptions of what a rock band should be are fighting for the power in this one collective organization. Also obviously, the fight is exactly what makes some things they do ("Final Solution," "Ain't It Fun," and "Life Stinks") so good. I know that Chris Stigilano (who must have written the liner notes) will shit if he reads this, but the band Peter Laughner and David Thomas went on to form and the band Cheatch Chrome, Johnny Madansky, and Stiv Batons went on to form are both more fully realized and ultimately better bands, than this prepubescent project most of us never got to experience in the first person. Given a second chance, a new residence in Cleveland, and an advanced enough age to get into clubs and I would probably go see Rocket From The Tombs myself. Figuring I don't get all that, I'm glad I have this record + record, but I'm sure I'll never listen to it as much as I listen to any pre-reformation Pere Ubu. I might also listen more to the Dead Boys' *Young Loud and Snotty*, if I had a copy of it. Does anybody

want to give me one? (available from Ajax the week I ordered it)—G.T.

**Royal Trux: "Hero Zero"/"Love Is"** (Drag City 7") Sounding like nothing else and very little like their debut L.P., Royal Trux continue to stumble down a path that nobody else has a name for or is brave enough to follow themselves. Jennifer grunts and shrieks like the noises are being wrenched up from the bottom of a very knotted up stomach, while the band zigzags with her and around her in a manner that is both haphazard and precise. To add to the general oddness, an atrophied Exile-era Stones riff works its way through the murk of each song. Mick Taylor didn't play on this record, but a guy from the Chant diad. Which is pretty strange in itself, if you think about it. (from POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—Marc Moore

**Royal Trux: *Twin Infinitives*** (Drag City L.P.) Sometimes I wish someone, who liked all the same things I like and was capable of expressing himself and backing up what they said, could write all these record/tape reviews for me. Any volunteers? Then I could enjoy music like everyone else and not have to worry about what I can possibly say about every silly thing that comes along. Then perhaps I could even get my fanzine out on a semi-regular basis. Putting all our dreams aside, we now come to the business at hand, the new double album from everybody's favorite dizzy duo, Royal Trux. A double album? Right off, I get suspicious, when I smell a double album coming. When bands start putting out double albums, whether they are the Clash or Sonic Youth, you can be sure the records that result will suck. Only once in a while a true genius like Captain Beefheart pulls off a whole double L.P. set of new music, without coming out looking like a self indulgent fool. But, self indulgence is the way musical creation works with Royal Trux, and so the double album format is not an unfitting way to go. Double albums are also usually a consumer ripoff. The poor dumb music fan pays double the money to feed a musician's double sized ego. *Twin Infinitives* is not like that. For \$11 (that's what I paid at Wax and Facts in Atlanta) buyers get over 60 minutes of music. That's as much music as most CDs, and costs three bucks less than Cecil Taylor's *3 Phasis* on CD costs at Tower. I think that is a bargain. In addition, this Royal Trux record comes with a handsome gatefold sleeve. Still, I doubt very many people will enjoy listening to it. I

think it is great, but my tastes don't necessary reflect what a lot of other people are going to think. Gone are Michael Earley's drums, and with them, any remnant of a rock music sensibility anybody might have detected with a magnifying glass on the first Royal Trux album. What remains is a cloudy, introverted, screwball brew that changes from song to song. Neil Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema obviously get their inspiration from somewhere most of us don't know about. Their songs don't make a bit of sense but, nevertheless, hold together as songs. There is almost too much on this record to endure records by the above named folks. fathom in one or twenty listenings, but I intend to keep working at it. (from POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**Robert Rutman: 1939** (Pogus Productions L.P.) Robert Rutman plays large amplified sheets of steel, bowing them with steel rods and steel strings. This

Records) The liner notes to this baby twice say something about the drums being a drum machine, which will be more than obvious to anyone who listens to the A-side for three seconds. Other than that, Sad Sack sounds like a bunch of (well, three) dumb young guys who got together in order to produce a Bastards/Lubricated Goat kind of band, but pretty quickly got way off track due to limited musical skill and learning dysfunctions. All of which is fortunate for those of us who have already had Sample couplet: "Heinous bitch/fucking witch." Hey, I think I wrote that song in the fourth grade about my evil teacher who constantly complained to my parents about my bad conduct and "incessant" talking. (from 418 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY, 12210, USA)—G.T.



## U t G r e t

instrument is called the bow chime. Side two of this record features a trio of quivering Bow Chimes. Side one has the bow chime in duos with tabla, Tibetan horn and a "Single String Steel Cello." This music is attention grabbing and powerful, while remaining coolly in the background. The mood created on side two is not unlike Brian Eno's variations on the Pachelbel piece, which was the best of Eno's ambient work. Side one is a more mixed up affair with the bow chime trading licks with these other sounds. There is nothing else quite like Rutman's Bow Chimes, and the only place I know of where you're going to hear them is on this record. (from 151 First Ave. #201, New York, N.Y., New Britain, CT, 06050-0065, USA)—G.T.

**Sad Sack: "Heinous Bitch"/"Trash It"** (ERL

**Saint Johnny: *Four Songs*** (Turn of the Century 7") It must be pretty difficult getting noticed amidst today's embattled, overcrowded "indie rock scene." Fat chance these folks will ever get far beyond the glory of this review, which is too bad because this E.P. is better than a lot of the stuff that rides through my life. With feeling, a handful of rock clichés are combined. We aren't talking about Pavement or Urner or anything that great, but, at least, this has saved itself from the "to sell" pile. I couldn't tell you whether or not that means somebody would want to actually buy the thing. (from POB 65, record. (from 151 First Ave. #201, New York, N.Y., New Britain, CT, 06050-0065, USA)—G.T.

**Jim Sauter/Don Dietrich/Thurston Moore: *Barefoot In the Head*** (Forced Exposure L.P.) A

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noise dreamdate of a sort is realized here. What it amounts to basically is a Borbetomagus record with this goofy famous guy scraping strings in the place of Donald Miller, without even a "courtesy of megakill korp" or anything. Through much of side one and all of side two you'd hardly notice the Thurston if somebody had not printed his name right on the front cover. You will not find anything this bent from any S.Y. related disc since Lee's twelve inch. Specifically, "All Doors Look Alike" opens this blue meany on a misleading distorto-pulse. The very suggestive among you might think this is a rock record. The cut rumbles along nicely with Don and Jim teaching Thirsty a thing or two about sonics. Moore gets his best "licks" in on "Tanned Moon" and "Ass Backwards." "Concerning The Sun As A Cool Solid" is the main entree here. This is eighteen minutes of noxious black gunk you will want to lay face

down in and just choke on. In my book of bad news this is one of the best records I heard in 1990. (from POB 1611, Waltham, MA, 02254, USA).—G.T.

Sebadoh: *Sentridoh/Losers* (cassette) In Ritchie Unterberger's invariably astute review of *Weed Forestin* in Option, I read it was "way below the average indie cassette" in terms of sound quality. All I can say is Ritchie must be hearing a whole different class of indie cassettes than I hear. Compared to most of the cassettes I get in the mail, in particular *Sentridoh/Losers*, their album sounds like it was produced by Butch Vig, and who cares about recording quality anyway? CD fans, I guess, but not music fans. If Sebadoh "forsook the deliberately crude, almost trendily amateurish production," as Ritchie suggests, they would not be Sebadoh anymore but Galaxie 500 or maybe Simon & Garfunkel. One minute Ritchie's talking about poor fidelity and the next minute he is pleading with Barlow to get a "real group" for the sake of his great talent. If Lou and Eric have to stop being Lou and Eric and start worrying about all this silly stuff Ritchie complains about, they will not have any time left to make good records and tapes. *Sentridoh/Losers* has more of a, how you say, industrial/punk rock feel to it than the L.P., like if Phil Ochs had joined the Modern Lovers instead of getting himself murdered. (\$4 from Lou Barlow at 74 Glenwood Rd., Somerville, Ma., 02145, USA).—G.T.

Sebadoh: *Weed Forestin* (Homestead L.P.) There is so much to hear on this record that listening to it can be an overwhelming experience. The songs are beautiful, funny, ugly, sad, silly, and mean while searching for that which was lost or never found through the corrupting maze of self and (non) significant others. The guitars are acoustic and the drumming is sparse; which is as simplistic a description as Jardek plays the blues or Jesus was a carpenter. Sebadoh makes sounds with acoustic guitars I've never heard before. Roy Orbison, Patsy Cline, and other noises from across the universe float throughout the record in an integral way. This was made over three years ago, so I guess it is the best record of 1990 by inverse default. While most losers ape washouts from twenty years ago, Sebadoh trudge bleary eyed and cottonmouthed on to a brand new way. (from POB 900, Rockville Center, NY, 11571-0800, USA).—Marc Moore

Sebadoh: *Asshole* (Vertical 7") Sometimes big things come in little packages. Such is the case with these indie rockers. Nobody else on the planet can touch what they are doing because it comes from inside of two special damaged beings. Outside influences exist only by coincidence or in irony. It is really hard to explain why I think this music is so wonderful

but I do. (from Jim S., 1545 18th St., N.W., Suite 712, Washington, DC, 20036, USA)—G.T.

**Sebadoh: Gimme Indie Rock** (Homestead 7" E.P.) Side one has the guys doing conceptual trio rock. "Gimme" is a brilliantly stupid anthem for "the new generation of electric white boy blues." If there were any justice in this world this song would equal the death of rock music. Side two is more of what we've learned to expect from these desperate muzzheads: delicate, lonely, frighteningly personal, psychedelic folk noise. (from POB 800, Rockville Centre, N.Y., NY, 11571, USA)—G.T.

**Sekiri: Take Me To Sekiri** (Public Bath CD) This crummy sludge-punk type band would not have a snowball's chance in Kuwait of getting noticed by anybody if they weren't 1.) all female and 2.) Japanese. The fact that they sing songs like "Let's Fuck" probably also helps in certain circles. This is a shitty compact disc reissue of their first L.P. that came out in Japan several years ago. Sekiri is not even as good as L-7 or Babes In Toyland. I'd call it a must avoid. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI., 53701, USA)—G.T.

**Elliott Sharp: KILIA/VI!** (Newport Classic CD) When he was in Atlanta playing a solo show at KJing, Sharp warned us ironically that this CD was "classical music." Actually what he meant to say was that this CD was no different than a lot of his other work but that it features a different instrument. The mode of composition employed on "Twenty Below" and "KILIA/VI!" is really not so different from some of his pieces with Carbon. On "Twenty Below" he brings together six different musicians playing a variety of keyboard type instruments. This is a rollicking jaunt through Sharp's composer/mathematician brain. The players are guided by algorithmic instructions through a series of improvisations. "KILIA/VI!" is Sharp alone "playing" impossible piano pieces using sampled piano parts that are manipulated with a computer. The third and final piece is "Mapping," a hands-on solo piano exercise where Sharp applies his two hand hammering bass technique to the lower keys of the piano. The resulting music is a rich, full-bodied exploration of sonics. Elliott Sharp has been composing, producing and improvising some of the most challenging and truly experimental music known to man for more than a decade, and this CD shows he is still at the top of his class as we roll into and over yet another decade. (from 106 Putnam St., Providence, RI, 02909, USA)—G.T.

**Silverfish: Fat Ax!** (Touch & Go L.P.) Here is some more grungy/noisy rock music. Please, no yawning in class! Silverfish stand

out from the crowd I want to lump them with in a couple of ways. The guitarist, a guy named Fuzz, is one of the most creative guitar players in rock today. He gets sounds out of his instrument that were never meant to come from a guitar, and he does this without ever using any funny machines that say MIDI on them. I bet, not to suggest that I have any problems with funny machines or "MIDI" whoever he is. Silverfish's foul-mouthed singer, Leslie snarls and growls so mean you will be cowering in the corner you stupid ass fuck. Silverfish are quite simply the loudest, ugliest sounding English rock band in memory, like if Pussy Galore was a metal band from Sheffield. *Fat Ax!* is their second record on Touch & Go. I assume the title has something to do with my buddy from Guns N Roses, but I'm not asking. None of this is reason for anybody who is understandably sick of this kind of shit to care about this record. Sometimes I too get sick of stuff like this, but a lot of times nothing else will do. This rock n roll thing is a nasty habit I guess I ought to be ashamed of. At my ripe old age I certainly should know better. But I don't. So take it from this lost cause, for dirty-assed, spit on your grave, rub sand into your wounds, rock n roll bullshit, nobody does it better than Silverfish in 1991. They are up there with Laughing Hyenas, King Snake Roost, and hardly anybody else. (from POB 25520, Chicago, IL, 60625, USA)—G.T.

**16-17: When All Else Fails** (Vision L.P.) One of my three or four most played records of 1990 is this Swiss release that came out sometime before I actually heard it, exactly when I'm not quite certain. This monster absolutely fries all the competition. Recapturing the spirit and groove of the Funkadelics, Ornette's *Dancing In Your Head*, James Blood Ulmer, and *No New York* era Contortions all at once without particularly borrowing from any of them, this band is digging a niche into funk or jazz or punk or something unnameable. Like all the best music of this day and age 16-17 pretty much lays to waste all the existing categories, making it almost impossible to write about them without inventing more stupid useless categories. I will try to avoid classifying this noise, and simply emphasize how heavy and funky and mean this shit is. The band is sax, distorted sax, electronics, guitar, tapes, voice, and drums. The record was recorded live and is urgent and breathtaking as a result. (from Vision POB CH-4005, Basel, Switzerland; distributed by Rec Rec POB 717, CH-8026, Zurich, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Skin Chamber: Wound** (R/C cassette) You remember Controlled Bleeding don't you? They were contemporaries "with such genre forerunners as Einstürzende Neubauten and the Swans," according to the press material that came with this tape. Actually they were a pretty shitty copy band that never made very original sounding records all the while "maintaining an experimental edge," again according to the press notes. I remember

Controlled Bleeding's Paul Lemos attempting to interview the Swans' Michael Gira in *Another Room* magazine, Spring 1985 issue, where the arrogant, shithead Gira would hardly begin to answer any of Lemos' silly questions. This was hardly the relationship between contemporaries. No, this was obviously a fan and a star failing to communicate. The picture that accompanied that story showed the Swans looking remarkably like the current Skin Chamber press photo. Yes! Lemos is back along with Chris Moriarty under this new name and to behold what is their primary soundalike precursor: the Swans! Compared to this new outfit Controlled Bleeding (at least the pre-Wax Trax version) was way out in front in the race for the avant garde, wherever that is or was. In their early Whitehouse influenced days their records like *Knees and Bones* were always good for a laugh and an earache. Later on, their more serious, textural stuff was actually pretty good. However, the Skin Chamber record at hand is a pathetic thing to endure, one that apes an approach these industrial youth on the cutting edge of the information war obviously never could get a grip on, though they have the fashion angle down pat. They pile on the clichés with orgasmic delight, so that this one is even more of an embarrassment than Controlled Bleeding's recent deadend stint with Wax Trax. They walk a tight rope between generic genre type A (ie: "metal") and generic genre type B (ie: "industrial") where they probably believe the big bucks are waiting for them. Haven't they noticed how ridiculous all this stuff has become, what an absurd thing recent tours by the likes of Foetus and PigFace turned out to be, and above all, haven't they noticed that Michael Gira is also involved in a band with the word "skin" in its name? Somebody please put these guys out of their misery before they put out any more miserable records. (from 225 Lafayette Street, Suite 407, New York, NY, 10012, USA)—G.T.

**Skits: Small Point** (BTT cassette) Another pleasant musical discovery in 1990 was finding out about the great guitar playing of John Jasnock and the equally great singing of Linda Lee Welch. Coming out of mixed up backgrounds that brought them both to country music at the same time, and then together to this Skits thing, Linda Lee and John are musically as different as day and night. What they do together is create a whole new window through which to perceive music. This tape documents but does not capture the quality of their live set. This is as exciting as any improvised music being made today. Experience it as close as you can get. (Write to BTT tapes at 45 Hadfield St., Sheffield, S6 3RR, England)—G.T.

**Soixante Etages: Heatproof Cauldrons For**

**Wanglers** (Revpermi L.P.) I probably would have put this on my "top twenty" list printed elsewhere this issue, but it came out so long ago (I think, 1988) that I thought it was probably disqualified. This is a really weird record by this curious band from France. You get an idea of how strange it is from the name of the L.P., but also note some of the song titles: "The Warmy Style of the Fragile Simple," "An Eye Upon His Desert? A Leg On His Desk," "The Simple Warmth Of The Fragile Style"... The words are even more out of whack. The music doesn't have much to do with anything else. It is rock but rock that has been chewed and digested and shit out as something unlike rock as it is usually played on this planet. (from 33 Revpermi, 4 Rue Dom Calmet, 54000 Nancy, France)—G.T.

**Slant: *Hive*** (These L.P.) This is another excellent record from the folks at Another by a unique group. Slant employ a large, odd assortment of instruments (accordion, turntables, harmonium, fife, clarinet, marimbas, lots more) along with more typical instruments. Their approach to songwriting and arrangement is also quite distinct, borrowing from all over to come up with their own deformed songform. There are hints of free improv, Eastern music, European folk, native American songs, no wave, Bartók, the blues, the tango, Mingus, and all kinds of things I couldn't begin to pin a name on. Much like Biota, *Crawling With Tarts*, or Sue Ann Harkey, Slant explores other musics at the same time that they invent their own music. At times the music can be very solemn or mysterious at other times it is music you can laugh out loud at without feeling guilty about it. At times this stuff is as noisy as anything. At other times it is music any grandmother might think is o.k. "Sending Dazz To Kellogs" is the kind of turntable/cassette thing that Tom Smith, perhaps even Christian Marclay could be proud of. "Litter" is the kind of "song" I thought nobody outside the 1957 Rock Act from Chattanooga was capable of writing. I could sit up all night drinking coffee trying to think of the words to box this in with, that would convey its essence to someone who is going to read this review months from now, and I might never get close to doing what I set out to do. So I'll save my stomach lining for another day, and just encourage people to give Slant a listen. Contact the band at 7 Durham Road, London, E16 4NF. U.K. Distributed by Recommended at 387 Wandsworth Rd., London, SW8 2JL U.K.—G.T.

**Slawterhaus: *Live*** (Victo CD) These guys play relentless cut-throat free improv capable of putting a smile on the face of even an old grouchy like me. Slawterhaus is Dietmar Diesner (sax), Johannes Bauer (trombone), Peter Hollinger (percussion) and Jon Rose

(violin and cello). Together these three Germans and one Australian cook up a musical stew that puts them in the same league with the great tradition of European improvisation (you fill in the names!). Do not understand that to mean that they are simply going over ground already mapped out by somebody else. Besides being apparently insane (goes with the territory), these four masters of imploded-jazz/noise/fun are exploring the musical unknown. "Bravely going" Blah. Blah. Blah. They take this thing called jazz (an embarrassment second only to rock), and they chew it up, spit it out, mix it with some dried leaves, egg yolk and mud and spread the whole mess on the clean white walls of a music circa 1991. The resulting "work of art" makes no sense by normal standards of measurement, but you'll nevertheless be rolling on the floor in an uncontrollable fit of delight. Unreality (and other words that begin with "un") is the framework where this music feels most at home. Building an upsidown world out of broken off fragments of our world gone astray is what Slawterhaus does best, which I guess makes these fellows akin to gods. Approach them with awe. (from Les Disques Victo, C.P. 460, Victoriaville, Q.C., Canada, G6P 6T3)—G.T.

**Slint: *Spiderland*** (Touch & Go L.P.) There are just a few things I wanted to say about the Slint record. First of all I must admit, I know nothing about this band. I stopped reading the press material when I read a review that described them as a cross between Sonic Youth and Big Black. Nevertheless, their record represents some kind of breakthrough for Touch & Go, a label with a party line that has thus far been leaning pretty heavily in one direction and not another. SST put out the These Immortal Souls record. Even Sub Pop is putting out Beat Happening records. But up until this point the only big changes of pace over at Touch & Go have been in the reissue department, particularly those silly Virgin Prunes records. This Slint thing is something different, at least on the surface. Somebody is probably wondering just what it is this record sounds like, but that is a question that, as usual, I am not going to be able to answer satisfactorily. Slint plays screwed to the hilt pop music with a razor edge so sharp your nerves will be shot before the record is over. I like the whole record, but the only thing on it I think is really great is the song called "Washer." It is a rock n roll anthem for a revolution that is just sitting there in a corner all by itself. Much like other songs that have punctuated the history of this stupid fucking white people "counterculture" thing (for me), "It Was A Pleasure Then," "1970," "Real World," "Halloween," "Kollops"... "Washer" seems to be speaking for a big something that isn't really there. Of course, in three weeks when I am completely sick of listening to this record it probably will not sound like it is speaking for anything. I suppose, that's the way these things are supposed to work. Remember, "The Rapper"? There was a time, one month, many years ago,

when that one meant something to me too. The time passed. (from POB 25520, Chicago, IL, 60625, USA)—G.T.

**LaDonna Smith & Davey Williams: *Travellers*** (Trans cassette) Does the arrival of this cassette by these founders of Southern improvisation mean that Davey and LaDonna have stopped putting out records after 14 years of record production? This is a nice enough looking cassette, what our pals over at Option would call "creatively packaged" (i.e. shrink wrapped [a waste of plastic], printed cover [waste of money], etc.). But cassettes, even professionally packaged cassettes, break and they also don't fit very well between all the records in my collection by the good folks from Trans Museq. None of which says anything about the music on this cassette, which is very fine by any but the most deluded standard. Years of improvisation and experimentation have taught this pair a thing or two. What this gives the rest of us is perhaps the best Trans Museq on record or tape. Davey Williams and LaDonna Smith are skilled players, in case anybody didn't already know, on guitar and viola respectively. Without giving the notion a hell of a lot of thought, I might even say Davey is the best guitarist and LaDonna the best violist in this country today. Because I haven't heard every guitar player and certainly not every viola player, I'm not really qualified to judge, but I'll try not to let that stop me. I do know that musically they are intimately linked, and more than anybody else I know of in the free improv scene, Davey and LaDonna embody the concept of listening and responding in the course of live improvised music. They have created their own exquisite vernacular and only they have mastered its every nuance. The rest of us can recognize the sound of it, even to the point of grasping some essence of meaning and thoroughly enjoying this music. But nobody but these two strange creatures from 'Bama is ever going to make music that sounds like this. Side one of this tape was recorded "live in the studio" in Birmingham. Side two was recorded "live in concert" at Klang right here in Little Five Points, Georgia. (from 1705 12th St. South, Birmingham, AL, 35205, USA)—G.T.

**Smog: *Floating*** (Drag City 7" E.P.) Here's some home brewed weirdness cut six ways that hits right where it hurts, and therefore means more to me than any big hair, big guitar band on the planet. Drag City has quickly become a major source of the new great American music, but please remember it is the singer not the label that matters. Even if nobody, as strange as the folks at Drag City must be, cared to put out records by the likes of Smog, even if Bill (Smog) Callahan performed these songs to nobody but Walkman, this music would still be as

important as it is. The real artists don't need an audience to vindicate their work. They don't even want their five minutes. All they need is a lifetime alone in a room. Fuck the information age. Forget about mass media. We don't need Madonna to put meaning into our lives. We bypass pomo for a place in the back where we don't call each other names, genre or otherwise, which is probably the (at least) tenth time around reiteration of the do it yourself model. We certainly aren't afraid of the prefix "re." We regurgitate. We reconstitute. We remodel. We reproduce. All of which wants to bring us back to pomo, but please leave that ugly bastard out of my Smog review once and for all. The avant garde may not exist but here in the back we are having a great time making noise anyway. So how do I explain Smog? Tiny Tim, Suckdog, Jandek, Half Japanese, *No New York*, the Shaggs, Eastman Stars, Daniel Johnston, the Legendary Stardust Cowboy, Sebadoh, and many other things great but very small. Write to Bill Smog at POB 820, Pasadena, MD, 21122, USA or write Drag City at POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**Some Velvet Sidewalk: "Pumpkin Patch"/"Apple"/"Burning World" (K 7 E.P.)** "Pumpkin Patch" is another great stupid emotionally wrecked song from these contemporary champs of garage psychedelic noise. "Apple" is comparatively predictable homemade punk, though you wouldn't want to call it tame. "The Burning World" sounds like some kind of parody of their loud guitar buddies over at Sub Pop—so close it could almost pass for Mudhoney... almost... (from POB 7154, Olympia, WA, 98507, USA)—G.T.

**Strangled Beatofts: "Practicing To Be A Doctor"/"Heeby Jeemy" (Forced Exposure 7")** This small package contains a really large piece of shit. I pause to wonder why anyone would bother to put out a stupid thing like this, but, at least, it is not another Sub Pop/Amphetamine Reptile/Sympathy/Touch & Go type band. This useless, throwaway music is probably worse (by any reasonable standards) than anything you'll hear from the aforementioned quartet of labels, but it's different. (from POB 9102, Waltham, MA, 02254, USA)—G.T.

**Suckdog: Little Flowers Dying (cassette)** This is the best Suckdog release I have heard, also the most introspective, sad and pathetic. Sometimes it also gets to be horribly self indulgent or just dumb. There are lovely moments here. And moments as stupid and disturbing as any I've heard on an indie cassette release or anywhere else, for that matter. I like this cassette very much, though it is usually quite a strange experience to listen to in one sitting. That is not because it is

long. It is actually fairly short. Credits are nonexistent, but I'm sure Lisa is not totally alone on this tape. She sounds like the loneliest girl in the world, but I know she's far from that. (from POB 1491, Dover, NH, 03820, USA)—G.T.

**Suckdog: Kill Ralph (one-sided Psycho Acoustic Sounds 7")** This one song is not as good as much of what is on the above cassette. It is a funny idea, I guess, but reading about it here or in the Ralph catalogue is just as funny as actually hearing the record. I don't feel ripped off for paying \$2.50 for this one dumb side, but I'm a lot more tolerant of wasting my money on pieces of plastic than a lot of people. Money would be much better spent on the \$1.89 DQCE cassette reviewed somewhere above, full of wonderful songs you will want to listen to over and over. I will probably not listen to this record too many more times, but I might well return again to gaze at the handsome etching on side two. (from 109 Minna Street #391, S.F., CA, 94105, USA)—G.T.

**Sudden Infant (Invplus one-sided 7")** This is such a perfect, funny concept, "reviewing" it is not much of an issue. "Destruction means progress. Progress means beauty. Beauty only exists in action." This one sided recording of somebody breaking glass is certainly a work of beauty by my foolish standards. The package comes with a little baggy containing a piece. This is art and a slap in the face of art and everything that art has ultimately become and nothing at all. Where can anyone go from here? How did anyone ever get to here? Why would anyone want to leave? (from Schimpflich c/o Invplus S., POB 4804, 8022, Zürich, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Tall Dwarfs: Weeville (Flying Nun L.P.)** I read somewhere some time ago that this duo had disbanded. This newish release is indication that they existed well through summer 1990, at least, though I have no guess as to their current whereabouts or circumstances. Chris Knox and Alec Bathgate are two of the major songwriter/producers of the post-what-the-fuck era, like if a John Lennon reborn teamed up with the young Brian Wilson instead of you know who. The Tall Dwarfs exist in the same weird pop folk noise realm currently occupied by folks like Pavement, the Dead C, and Sebadoh. Yet, while those people are all great, the Tall Dwarfs have already managed to produce one of the most significant bodies of music in "rock" since the Birthday Party or Einstürzende Neubauten. They have achieved this status (at least in my head) even though this is their first official full length L.P. (i.e. *The Long and Short of It* is a long player on one side and extended play on the other and *Hello Cruel World* is a "best of"). (available from Ajax, POB 805293, Chicago, IL, 60680-4114, USA)—G.T.

**The 3Ds: Swarthy Songs For Swabs (Flying Nun 12" E.P.)** The 2nd record I've heard from

these uncharacteristic New Zealanders is a mixed attack. To say this was part Cannanes garage pop, part Tall Dwarfs backhandness, part Snapper techno/disco, part Thrown Ups grunge would be a real crock, but, hey, I've already said it, right? This is what Sonic Youth should have done, instead of whatever it was they did. This is a nonchilled sounding rock record that came out in 1991, and that alone makes it a virtual unchallenged champion from left field. "Meluzina Man" (also on *X-pressway Pile Up* compilation cassette) is a microcosmic poppy number that begs you to make it your very own. Sample lyric: "Eat your body up till it stops and don't you ever say you didn't want it that way." Along (alone) with the likes of Pavement, Slint, Dairy Queen Empire, etc., these folks are paving a brand new highway on a nonexistent terrain. Fuck the daydream nation! (available in the U.S. the last time I looked from Ajax Records, POB 805293, Chicago, IL, 60680-4114, USA. Otherwise write to Festival Records, POB 1170, Auckland, New Zealand.)—G.T.

**The Thrown Ups: Melancholy Girlhole (Amphetamine Reptile 3 7" boxset)** One would not have predicted that Americans would dance so readily with these elegant strangers. The Thrown Ups seem so much like an English creation, stirring their Nigerian-English birthright in with high-gloss good looks and a throwback vocal style built for jazzy lounge combos and romantic musings in the dark over a glass of cognac. "Hairy Crater Man," with its samba swish is one of the most finespun moments to capture the heart of the American public in some time. There's also a tangible rhythmic pulse on the other tracks here, and singer Judah's deft, warm phrasing lets him glide through tasteful conga taps and sax hooks with a now chiming, now velvety style that's endlessly sure of itself. Simply enchanting (from 2541 Niccollet Ave. S., Mpls., MN, 55404, USA)—Marc Moore

**Undercurrents: Functionally Illegitimate (Piranha Produktion cassette)** For a while now, Undercurrents has been one of the more interesting of the humming droning cassette artists working in the U.S. of A. This latest is no exception. Creaking locomotion noises, pounding metal percussion, a wash of white noise, and moaning-bow like sounds blend into Nice Noise For Nowhere People. There is nothing strictly new going on here, but like Atlanta's (recently lost to the Big Apple) Geoff Dugan and hardly anybody else I can think of without straining, Undercurrents (aka Bill Jaeger) is working within this genre and finding something interesting. (from Bill Jaeger, 506 W. Johnson Dr., Payson, AZ, 85541, USA)—G.T.

**Ut Gret: (pronounced OOT GREET)**

(cassette) Ut Gret is Joe Conroy and David Stille playing with a changing array of other musicians. On past cassettes this has included folks like Greg Goodman, Henry Kaiser, Eugene Chadbourne, Charles K Noyes, John Oswald and Paul Hoskin. This latest cassette also features a number of different musicians, but it is mostly Conroy and Stille's show. They each play a vast array of instruments. Stille is the woodwind man, playing saxes, clarinets, and flutes among other things. Conroy sticks mostly with strings, these include koto, violin, guitar, pedal steel, hammer dulcimer, and lots more. The music is improvised, but moves into areas not usually associated with "free improv." This tape includes eleven pieces recorded at five different performances. Most of the pieces are Conroy and Stille with one or two other musicians. The exception is the excerpt from "The Concerto For Chaos and Orchestra," a big band piece with some twenty-seven musicians. This cassette is quite diverse, offering surprises and fun at every turn. (from Joe Conroy, 2356 Ingleside Dr., Louisville, KY, 40205, USA)—G.T.

Unrest: "Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl"/ "Hydroplane"/ "Feeling Good Fixation" (K/ Teen Beat 7); Unrest: "Cherry Cherry"/ "Wednesday And Proud" (Hemola/Teen Beat 7) An unexplainable band is this one.

They make rock music that is determined to not be categorized, always trying to dodge the pigeonholing pens of us nasty critic types, at the same time succeeding at winning our tainted miserably hearts. Previous efforts have given Unrest a reputation for eclecticism, but these five bubblepop tunes pretty much dash that misnomer into numerous precious little pieces. "Yes She Is My Skinhead Girl" is catchy and sexy and clever and cliched, all in one breath, and it's the best song of the batch. "Cherry Cherry" and "Wednesday And Proud" are icy, murky pieces of noisy pop that don't have that much to do with the good craftsmanship usually attributed to Unrest. "Hydroplane" is like if you crossed the Fall with Kraftwerk and the results sounded like the Jesus and Mary Chain. "Feeling Good Fixation" just floats by like a psychedelic snowflake and then it's gone and forgotten. Unrest records are not something that your average Avant Head is going to get all creamy over. It is your basic pop trash. In 1967 this would have been top forty radio fodder that cool people into Hendrix and Zappa or whatever would have turned off scornfully. In 1991 things like coolness and avant garde and the difference between good and bad music are not so easy to define. And to someone like me who hasn't really enjoyed a record by Hendrix or Zappa in about 15 years, a band like Unrest is fresh air in a smoggy smoggy world. (from Teebeet, POB 50373, Washington, DC, 20091, USA)—G.T.

Various: *Beyond the Wildwood: A Tribute To Syd Barrett* (Communion L.P.) / Various: *Stoned Again: A Tribute To The Stones* (Communion L.P.) / Various: *If Six Was Nine: A Tribute To Jimi Hendrix* (Communion L.P.) / Various: *Heaven & Hell: A Tribute to the Velvet Underground—Volume One* (Communion L.P.) I don't usually lump releases together like this, but this whole tribute L.P. thing is getting way out of hand. This is the immediate way I've found to deal with it. I suppose most of our readers have gotten the drift of this concept at this point so I will not wallow in its stench. I'm still uncertain why anyone would want to listen to a bunch of different contemporary bands cranking out the bulk of some rock iconological figure's oeuvre, but somebody must be buying these things. I'm sure glad it's not me. Even harder than trying to imagine why these things exist is trying to write something at all interesting about them. O.K., so I'll try. The sixties sucked. The seventies sucked even worse. All those bands that were supposed to be so great sucked the most of all. The Stones, Dylan, the Beatles, Hendrix, Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, the Doors, the Dead, the Jefferson Airplane, Cream, the Who... you name it. You can take them all, wad them up into one big goopy ball and ram them up Gary Held's skinny ass. That would be the proper

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resting place for all that phoney overplayed till dead beyond belief bullshit. Obviously that's not about to happen because the recording industry has come to its senses. After thirty or fifty or whatever number of years of trying every six months to come up with something new to mass market into the open mouths of contemporary young people, the industry has come to realize it can rely on a proven formula, the sixties!, the biggest youth market gimmick in history! There is no need to take chances and waste money on new products that might not sell, when there are all these safe proven products lying around waiting to be reintroduced. If you are a recording industry the first step toward reintroduction of old product is to make obsolete the old music format so consumers will have to pay \$14.99 for shit that's been lying around in cutout bins for \$3.99 for twenty years. The next step is the reunion plan, wherein you get as many still living has-beens as possible to regroup into rough approximations of their original bands. Most of them are glad to do it since you never paid them much money the first time around, and they are too stupid or fucked up to do anything else that make a living. The third step is to replace top forty radio with classic rock radio. The radio stations are more than willing to follow this course for obvious reasons—no more shuffling to keep playlists up to date, no more dealing with record company promotion people, no more subscriptions to *Billboard*. So it is easy to see how and why the recording industry has chosen to bring the sixties "back to life." It is a little harder to understand why most of a generation of western human animals have chosen to lap up this regurgitated slop as if it had really meant something all along. A college student I know who likes the Grateful Dead suggested, when I queried him about why he listened to such bad old rock music instead of listening to something new, that most new rock music was shallow and phoney. This is true obviously, but it is more true of sixties rock, and even more true of seventies stuff. The tribute L.P. is a minor offshoot of the whole revival monster. Since the indie labels don't generally have rock of the ages material hanging out in their vaults, it is one way for them to get in on the game. *If 6 Was 9* is the worst of these four winners by a long shot, and that is saying something. I guess. If you like Hendrix, you will want to continue to listen to the originals. If you hate Hendrix, you will still enjoy the originals more than these covers. *Stoned Again* is better, though not nearly as good as Pussy Galore's *Exile*. The Membranes are probably the best band on this record, and their "Anjie" (sic.) is certainly different, and lots better!!! than the original. On the other hand Dave Kusworth's "Child of the Moon" sounds pretty much exactly like the original, not really better or worse. "Rocks Off" and "Standing In the Shadows" are both admirable covers of two of the better songs by The Family

Cat and The Bomb Party respectively. What? Noise's "Under Cover Of the Night" is funny, although I've never heard the Stones do the song. Some of this like Death of Samantha's "Salt of the Earth" and the Henry Kaiser Band's "Tell Me" are really terrible, but hey that's half the "fun" of these tribute records! No? *Beyond the Wildwood and Heaven & Hell* both feature a bunch of my favorite old rock songs hacked at by a bunch of shitty bands I don't care about at all. Many of the interpretations are pretty close to the originals, but just different enough to make them sound like alternate takes. The only groups on these two that add much of their own making are (no surprise) T.V. Personalities and (big surprise) Nirvana. Covers of "Apples and Oranges" and "Here She Comes Now" respectively actually come to life again in these people's hands. On the opposite end of the stick, Buffalo Tom turns "All Tomorrow's Parties" into a marriage of Bruce Springsteen and Hüsker Du. A huge turd is what those two give birth to. Beat Happening were smart if they really refused to be on the Velvets record because "Lou Reed was a motherfucker" as it states in the press material. All these records are supposedly available from POB 95265, Atlanta, GA, 30347, USA. The only "tribute album" I've heard that I actually liked was *Rules Highway Revisited* with good cuts by Peter Stampfel, Daniel Johnston, Galaxie 500, Unrest, Shonen Knife, and others, and you'll have to get it from elsewhere.—G.T.

**Various: Face To Face/Vol. 2 (Odd Size L.P.)** This is not really a comp, but a "split" L.P. A split record is not a record that has been torn in two, but a record that features music by two bands, usually in equal proportions. This is a category I'm never sure where to place in this arbitrary alphabet and usually end up putting here with the collections under "v" for "various." The two bands on this record are Vox Populi! and H.N.A.S. (that's Hirsche Nicht Auf Sofa, in case anybody is curious). These are two bands that complement each other nicely, though they are quite different from each other. If not as different as black and white, they are at least as different as, say, brown and blue. Both bands work from the sphere I'll vaguely classify as "industrial electronics." Of the two, Vox Populi! is the more difficult to put a nametag onto, if that was what I wanted to do. "Permanent Revolution" is a really dumb song with these hokey, clichéd big beats and lead guitar that is straight out of the Handbook of Bad Rock Solos. Then, on the other side of this goofy group's personality, there is this one called "Samurai," with lots of creaky, scary synth noise, clock riffling, and effective "musique concrete." "Permanent Revolution Part. 15" is even further out there on the Richter scale of noise, despite some more of that annoying guitar picking. These folks would probably like to get signed to Wax Trax and eventually turn into Killing Joke. At that point

in time nobody will ever use the word "industrial" when they're talking about Vox Populi! In the meantime, there's some fun stuff on this record side. But the H.N.A.S. side is better. This is noisy, experimental rock music very much in the same vein of other German bands like P16 D.4 and early Einstürzende Neubauten. The side works like a composed piece, with individual movements, flowing together or colliding senselessly. Melodic treated guitar dances with bits of sampled confusion. It should go without saying that there isn't anything particularly daring or new about this music, but these H.N.A.S. people are good at what they do. What they do is build sound structures of ugliness and decay. Somewhere below all that there is also something pretty. (from 24 Rue de Laghouat 75018, Paris, France)—G.T.

**Various: Fetish (Silent CD)** Here is another split release. This one is a first to my limited experience: a split compact disc. Now, splitting a compact disc sounds to me like a better idea than splitting a record, though I can't say I've tried either. However, I do know somebody who put a CD into a microwave, but I don't recommend anybody trying this at home, especially not with this CD. You might actually want to listen to this one. It features two of the most interesting practitioners of low key sonic electronic noise of the last half decade: Arcane Device and PGR. Arcane Device is this strange guy named David Myers, a real feedback monster, but not the kind that is likely to appeal to most of you heavy metal redneck rockers out there. "Penetrating Black Ice" sounds more like a composition than anything I've heard from this source before. There are these mysterious waves of percussion that come in and out and a voice at the very end that says something that sounds like "welcome." Nevertheless, most of the piece is what I expected to hear: layers of humming Gregorian chant feedback, tamed but still wild on the inside. This is music for those who are weary of mere music. There is a tension burning through Myers' soundscapes that raises them above the level of "atmospherics," though they might very well pass. If there is tension in the music of PGR it is so hidden, so masked by the abundance of emptiness, no one will ever see it. PGR has moved music beyond music, not by violence, but by decay. "One Eye From Night" is so far gone there is almost nothing left. These "atmospherics" are only as destructive as the natural processes that break down the body of all things. This vision of sound is one place where we are going whether we like it or not. Because the music is so full of quiet, even silent spaces, the CD format is actually fitting. Of course, it comes wrapped in the normal CD "Breakfast On The Run" packaging. There are handy liner notes by Atlanta's own bare assed philosopher,

Alan Sondheim, foaming away in his usual hyper-simplified/hyper-complicated voice. The whole thing is a CD I have no problem recommending. (from 540 Alabama Suite 315, S.F., CA, 94110, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *Japan Bashing Volume 1*** (Public Bath 7" E.P.) In their continued efforts to expose the West to the noises of the East, Public Bath is bringing out this seven inch compilation series. The four bands on number one offer a diverse but typically incestuous cross section. The Boredoms are the stars here or at least they should be. No "punk" band has sounded this fresh since I shudder to think when "Disco Mosco" is hardly their best song, but it is a representative slab of their individual form of noise. UFO or Die is two guys from the Boredoms who claim to be not-of-this-earth along with one admitted earthing. Their one cut here "Space Disco" is sure to get even the most bashful of your wallflowers out on the dance floor shaking your stuff. Omoide Hatoba is two different Boredoms hooked up with crazed bassman Tsuyama the Hermit. The song sags a little in its second minute, but one smoldering minute should not be maligned. The nearest thing to regular rock 'n' roll noise on here is Hanadensha, a band boasting only one Boredom. Hanadensha's "Future Deadlock" is as good as what the Cows, King Snake Roost or Dirt are doing in their respective rock n roll arenas. As 7" comps come and go this one is one of the jewels of this anachronous format. (from POB 2134, Madison, WI, 53701, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *Japan Bashing Volume 2*** (Public Bath 7" comp) The second time around is a pretty disappointing followup. Only two bands: Subvert Blaze and the Playmate. The former is three guys, the latter four girls. Neither does much for this one. (from above address)—G.T.

**Various: *Magic Ribbons Vol. I*** (Leopard Gecko 3" 7") Another label specializing in seven inchers, Leopard Gecko breaks through in a big way with this box set of three little records and six bands. Most interesting of the six is Sebadoh who shove an L.P.s worth of songs and ideas into the listener's eager ears over the course of their one side. This is the closest thing we are likely to get to a United Snakes of America bred Tall Dwarfs. Take the previous sentence to mean I'm not about to describe what this band sounds like or what they're trying to accomplish. Sebadoh here offer six tunes for our pleasure, six tasty bits for smart listeners. Happy Flowers likewise deliver two of their better efforts since graduating from the seven inch league. The Miles cover is the boys first attempt at fusion and it is a remarkable advancement for this musical form. "Make the Cat Stop Talking"

rocks in a way that wouldn't impress me as much if it were anybody else but them. Unrest's "Headringer" is instant hit material and hooks into the human brain like effective radio fodder. Those with pure unadulterated spirits will probably want to avoid this catchy song. "The Hill Part 1" is an instrumental that sounds, of course, totally different from everything else they've done. These guys are a microcosm of popular music, a tiny pop army capable of doing everything at once with their own twisted flair. I like these two selections better than anything on their last Caroline album but that's just a personal thing. Spook and the Zombies is more homemade pop music, though not quite so clever or hummable as Unrest or Sebadoh. Some words: "I'm going to be young and wild in my own special way." But they don't sound so wild or special to this old fart. King Missile and the Mystery Tramps are also probably supposed to be ingenious, cute, and funny, but neither of them does much to tickle a stodgy crowd like me, at least not this go around. This compilation attempts to represent a whole school of pop n rock music, and does a fine job of pointing at some of its tendencies. All six bands are at least good for a listen and perhaps a lot more than that. (from POB 45486, Tacoma, WA, 98445, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *Dope, Guns N Fucking In the Streets*** (Volume Six) (Amphetamine Reptile 7" compilation) Number six compiles four bands I don't know much about. It's too bad that three out of four come across like goofy parodies of something that might not have been so bad five or ten or fifteen years ago. Casus Belli's "Telemarking" is like if Michael Gerald sang with Drivin N Cryin or something. Hammerhead's "Grenlin Stomp" is sort of like the Ventures' go speedmetal, which probably sounds better than it is. The Crows' "Capital Hillbillies" doesn't go anywhere with me, despite a singer who does a pretty good Howlin Wolf/Beefheart imitation. I'll stick with the Gibson Bros for my funnypunk thrills. Jonestown's "Short Time Left" is the only thing on this offering that is ugly enough and grisly enough to make me want to listen to it again. The vocals sound like they're coming through a toilet and the guitar is bleeding all over this punk noise motherfucker. (from 2541 Nicotelle Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *I Hear The Devil Calling Me*** (Drag City 7" E.P.) This amazing little thing is undeniably one of my favorite pieces of plastic so far in 1991. Almost as eclectic as *Mighty Risen Plea* or an Unrest album, this E.P. nevertheless takes less time to listen to than any one side of any of those. Eleven different artists contribute around a minute of song each, the longest being the Renderers' title track "I Hear The Devil Calling Me" at one minute and eleven seconds. Numerologists should take note of the abundance of "ones" in all of this. The rest of the performers

are Alastair Galbraith, A Handful of Dust, Peter Jefferies, Olla, Dead C, Gate, Cyclops, Dadamah, David Mitchell, Queen Meanie Puss, and Stephen Kilroy. If you've never heard of most of these folks don't feel bad. All these visionary artists gather here to paint this humble mini-masterwork. Each song works when the moment comes but then sinks back into the stupendous glory of the whole when that moment passes. The point of all this, if indeed it wants or needs a point is to introduce in a compact (not disc) format Americans in general, Drag City fans in particular to the New Zealand label Xpressway. (from POB 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *Mighty Risen Plea*** (Sacred Frame 2-L.P.) A mighty ambitious project for Atlantan Andrew Pierce, this is a double album with twenty-four artists representing everything from ambience to hardcore, from dance pop to free improv, from "classical" music to "industrial" music. The really weird thing about this diverse selection of music is that it works as a whole, in a way you'd never imagine from such a motley assortment of talent. How Pierce has managed to accomplish this smooth flow without resorting to a terrible amount of lumping things into categories is one of the best tricks of summer '91. With a couple of exceptions (I hate the cuts from Jarboe and City of Lindas—perhaps because I just don't care for the styles), I like everything on this record. However, there are a some outstanding reasons why I would shell out \$10 for a copy of this record even if it were not true that a.) my own band is included or b.) the proceeds from this record go to worthy AIDS organizations. (Although last time I checked none went to Project Open Hand—one of the worthiest). There are excellent pieces by noisy LowLife faves like Bobetomagus, Crawling With Tarts, Tinnitus, Logos, the Shaking Ray Lewis with Jack Wright, and Murray Reams. Outside of records that have accompanied our last three issues, these are the only vinyl tracks available from the Shaking Rays, Tinnitus or Reams, which makes *Mighty Risen Plea* invaluable to people with high standards. The Shaking Ray Lewis certainly cough up a good one, with Mr. Wright blowing and rolling all over them. The Crawling With Tarts piece with the funny string of numbers and letters for a title is quite different from a lot of the music these very serious artists/musicians have produced in the past. Crawling over into "free music" territory, Michael on drums and Suzanne on piano are closer to Anthony Braxton or Cecil Taylor than somebody that has a cassette on Carl Howard's label. Bobetomagus are up to their usual high standards of quality music. Logos "Duo" (in this instance) is actually a solo improvisation on "African fiddle from Mali" by Monick

Darge. Murray Reams—a great American indeed—puts forth the hissiest, most subdued performance of the disc. His “Elegy” is up there with Nico’s and Patti’s, only it is dedicated to a thing, not a person. The Timinus cut is further proof that Robert Cheatham and Tim Seaton are a musical marriage made in heaven. Richard Gess is the fly in the pudding their future shock rumblings need. Most of Atlanta’s other musical resources are also represented. Cuts by “rockers” like Bruce Hampton, the Jody Grind, and Neon Christ are included, as well as a healthy representation of the city’s electronic/experimental crowd: PVC Precinct, Dick Robinson, and Accidents of Culture. Neon Christ were Atlanta’s best punk band circa ‘84/’85, and the self-titled song included here is on both their previous “7” records, which doesn’t matter much considering most people never heard it the first two times around. The Jody Grind cut is a remix from their Db records L.P. that sounds pretty much like the original to these ears. The Bruce Hampton and the Aquarium Rescue Unit track is actually just Bruce and Ricky Keller. It is previously unreleased, as far as I know, and it is one of the weirdest brews the man has delivered in years. With signing to lameass Arista an imminent possibility, this may well be the last good track we hear from old Bruce for years to come. In the *Nine Underground* corner we have two distinct longtimers. On the right there is PVC Precinct, whose ersatz multicultural approach to electro-pop music makes them sound like nobody else. On the left we have Accidents of Culture (Don Hassler and Jeff Gilbreth). Their “Better Than One” is a sampler nightmare or dream come true, depending on which side of the post-musical fence you are standing. Dick Robinson’s computer piece “MLK” is a subtler approach to electronic music. One completely nonmusical Atlanta legend represented is our own granddaddy of conspiracy theory Kerry Wendell Thornley, talking about Arthur Murray’s birthday. The only Athens band on the record is Nervex Clinic, an “industrial” outfit in the Wax Trax sense of the definition, as opposed to the Glen Thrasher definition. In this particular instance that isn’t as bad as it sounds. City of Lindas is a band from Savannah, Georgia, I’ve never seen play live. According to Mr. Pierce I’ve missed an amazing experience, but their one song, sounding like a more pop! REM, is enough to convince me not to bother. Jarboe used to live in Atlanta, but because she has been in NYC for many years (making the Swans sound worse) we are thankfully not obliged to claim her as one of our own. Due to her one track being mastered at the wrong speed, Jarboe held up the release of this record for weeks, which is a real shame considering that the incorrect version sounded better than this post-*Plastic Letters*, Blondie

sounding thing we’re stuck with here. Nevertheless, some other non-Atlantans (Fred Frith, Wisconsin Conservatory of Noise, and Randy Greif) offer fine experimental pieces. Wisconsin Conservatory of Noise is the latest nomenclature for Miekal And and Liz Was. Their tribal approach to mass media makes them a good companion to PVC Precinct. Randy Greif is involved in similar areas of electronic composition, although his music is less engaging to this set of ears than either WCN or PVC Precinct. Fred Frith’s “Mirror/Dark As A Match” is an excerpt from an opera by Frith and Francois-Michel Pesenti. This is a large group piece that recalls Frith’s work with Henry Cow. Other contributors fall outside any convenient parameters I can devise in the course of this review. Moe Tucker rocks with her usual Velvets drive on “Too Shy.” Crippled Hippo’s “Soundtrack” is the duo’s special brand of socially disobedient nursery rhyme. The record’s tour de force is the brilliant collaboration between Sue Ann Harkey and Hakim Bey, “Kop Culture.” Beginning with a famous quote from Orwell: “If you want a picture of the future—imagine a boot stamping on a human face forever.” Then Bey takes over: “If one fictional figure can be said to have dominated the pop cult of the 80s it was the cop—fucking police everywhere you turn—worse than real life.” Bey’s hard hitting critical text proposes the elimination of the image of the cop, a moratorium on its production in art. Harkey’s beautiful guitar improvisation is an unlikely but somehow apropos accompaniment to Bey’s on-target critique. Mofungo’s “Song About AIDS” is the record’s most direct statement about the tragic disease it is trying to fight, and I honestly don’t think putting out records is a very effective way to go about fighting the AIDS virus, but then what am I doing? What are you doing? What can anybody do? Our “kinder, gentler” society worries vaguely about potential victims instead of figuring out how to cure real victims of this perfect republican disease. What Andy Pierce has done is put together an exceptional collection of much of the best music of our era. It is hard to imagine a better survey of underground sound of the late information age. I would like to see Andy do this again. A new *Mighty Risen Plea* every couple of years would be a great thing indeed, though there probably are no plans for this to happen. Anyone serious about sound culture needs to buy this record. (From 1747 Jericho Ct., Tucker, GA, 30084, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *New York Eye and Ear Control*** (Matador L.P.) Another record with “New York” in its name, this collection is hard to put a name on (though I know there are plenty of suckers who will try to do just that), so its name might as well be “New York.” Somebody was trying to document something when they decided to put this bunch of bands together on one record, but just what the fuck is that

something? All but one of these bands have New York state addresses, so we are talking about a legitimate regional theme. The Biggest Square Thing’s address is not listed, but I know where Sue Garner lives and it ain’t Cave Spring, Ga. Royal Trux live in San Francisco, but I can understand why New York wants to claim them, since the Trux twins passed through town once and are the coolest listen on this record. *New York Eye and Ear Control* is a nice companion to another recent NYC collection, Elliott Sharp’s *Real Estate—New Music From New York*. This Matador record is certainly more “rock” oriented than that previous Ear-Rational anthology. The difference is comparable to the difference between the labels. But this is hardly a Matador sampler. Most of the bands didn’t have other Matador releases the last time I looked, and a lot of bands that might have made it onto a New York rock collection are nowhere to be found here. Much like the Sharp CD-only collection this one leans toward what you might call the “artsy” side of the cesspool of New York music. I certainly wouldn’t call it “artsy,” but I wouldn’t call it anything else either. As the disc turns this is how I read the whole thing. I can’t understand the appeal of the Dustdevils. I know their whole existence on the planet must be to hide me into writing a review comparing them to some other dumb NYC rockers. But I absolutely refuse. If I’ve done it before, I’m sorry. In *Sound Choice*, I called their first record “pop” or “commercial” or something. Listening to this band in 1991 doesn’t mean much more than listening to some hardcore soundthesame cartoon band. Yet, I have found myself listening to Dustdevils records from time to time. Timber doesn’t sound a thing like Sonic Youth, though Etron Fou Leleouban, V-Effect and all the bands on Lost records that are not Chain Gang are pretty good things to listen to this. Timber vocalist/guitarist Mark Howe is the Better Than Death trumpet mouthpiece player. Drummer Rick Brown also pounds for Fish & Roses, among others. I can’t tell you anything about bass player Faye Hunter, except that she sings pretty well and adds soulful thud and slap to their one short tune here called “The Crank-case.” I don’t know shit about Steve Fitch, although I do own a copy of a *Texas Trip*, which according to the sleeve includes something by Fitch. “Since I Quit My Job” seems to concern standing in line at the unemployment office and sounds kind of like some records I’ve heard by Eric Lund. These days, Cop Shoot Cop is just about the best “rock music” you are going to find without looking hard. I don’t say this with the same meaning I might have had with the Swans in ‘84, but more like the Rolling Stones in ‘71. If you take this to imply that a 50/50 mixture of *Fifth Swans* and *Exile On Main Street* Stones makes Cop Shoot Cop, you have some pretty

funny ideas. This band continues to wreak havoc upon the guitar(less) rock formula(s), while managing to fit rather nicely into those four walls. Lyrically they ride the film noir/big city drama shtick too much for my suburban boy tastes. I have to wonder what these art school dropout types know about all this. "Living from hand to mouth" translates into living from daddy's check to mommy's check. Interestingly Cop Shoot Cop are the only band to make it onto *Eye and Ear* as well as *Real Estate*. The only other musicians that appear on both records are the two that make up OWT, and they perform separately on the Ear-Rational CD. Listening to Zeena Parkins play electric harp is one of those (to borrow a righteous term) trans musical experiences which nothing else on earth compares to. Somehow she manages to appeal to four or five underground rock biz kingpins and, therefore, is getting known outside improv circles. Musical associations with the likes of Fred Frith couldn't help but help get her noticed. Playing with drum machine artiste David Linton certainly put her into a different musical arena from where most of improv types probably wanted to place her. When I was playing "Tektonika" from the OWT *Good As Gold* album on "Destroy All Music" radio program, Chris Campbell (cohost of "Tonguebath") asked "what is this dance music you are playing?" The kneejerk reaction to electronic drums is empirically no different from the same kind of reaction some people have toward, say, guitars or saxophones. These are musical phobias with sociopathic origins that someone like Robert Christgau could probably explain to you. They have nothing to do with the quality or quantity of the music of Zeena Parkins and David Linton. Let it suffice, "Alive With Pleasure" does not even get close to the category of dance music. The same could be said for the Borbetomagus contribution to the collection. Somebody probably is saying Borbetomagus are beating their tried and true musical vision into the ground, that they have driven off the proverbial end of their chosen musical pier and are proceeding to drown in the murky black water of total noise. Or you could say they have forced free improv to its extreme outside edge, where they have taken it upon themselves to pound on that wall with sledgehammers till the whole goddamned temple comes tumbling down. Art strike indeed! Borbetomagus have been practicing their own private music strike for over ten years now, and still no one else dares to join them in protest. Just what they are protesting is not the point. They protest with such gusto, such joy, such *unitus* inducing abandon, that musical mayhem must be good for the human soul. Dogs and cats love it too. Likewise it's a big hit with sedentary upstairs neighbors who inevitably start moving around whenever Borbetomagus is on the turntable. I don't know much about Circle X, though I have heard a couple of their records. This piece,

"(St. Sebastian of the Hood)," is an interesting, perhaps shallow concept, where rather hokey textures hang on top of each other: wanky bluesy guitar, "Radar Love" bass line, car noises, something that sounds almost like the female chorus off "You Can't Always Get What You Want," and rambling, improvisational drums that build into a rather steady throb. "Jet Pet," a reworking of a piece off Royal Trux's *Twain Infinitives* record, is as strangely technoprimative as John Oswald or Public Enemy, somehow naive and self-consciously postmodern in one breath. Railroad Jerk are closely allied with Cop Shoot Cop and almost as good. However, you will not find any samples on the bastard blues "From the Pavement." You will find more pseudo street wise lyrics about the brutal New Yorkish lifestyle. The Biggest Square Thing is LowLife heroes Sue Garner and Ruth Pyuser remaking guitar music from the bottom up. "She Shook Her Head" also features guest sampling and synthesis by Jim Biederman. This is one of the record's best pieces. However, Rudolph Grey's bitchin' improv catastrophe called "The Hall" is perhaps the records most astounding work, though it does have a member of a band signed to Geffen records in its cast of musicians. There's just no getting around Grey's cut to the bone bent free jazz guitar, perhaps the best on earth that is not Sonny Sharrock or Derek Bailey. Unsane sounds like an Amphetamine Reptile band, which is not such a horrible thing. I suppose. However, in a place like this it is not the sort of thing I expected to find. Another silly thing by Fitch closes out the collection on a low note, but compilation are like that. Overall this is a fine selection of NYC's most interesting noisy music makers. (from 611 Broadway, Suite 712, N.Y., NY, 10012, USA)—G.T.

**Various: *Real Estate: New Music From New York*** (Ear-Rational CD) In the tradition of all those fine vinyl compilations of NYC stuff (*Peripheral Vision*, *State Of The Union*, and *Island of Sanity*) that E. Sharp has put out over the years, *Real Estate* is a window into a music in progress, a "school" that's too busy instigating chaos in the streets to go to class. Many of the artists involved have appeared on one of Sharp's other compilations in different guises, but this latest document has a different feeling from the earlier collections. Yet, you'd hardly call this a musical genre. Following Cop Shoot Cop's "System Test" with Chunk's smooth, worldish "Demolition, All Undone," is the kind of thing only Elliott Sharp would program. The former is a song that's also on their Vertical L.P. among other places. The latter is not to be confused with the boring Matador band with a similar name. Everything else on this collection likewise goes in two different directions. The Ikue Mori/Luli Shioi duo called Tohban Djan is the most remarkably unclassifiable thing on the record. This strangely beautiful piece combines sparse unfunk bass and percussion improvisations with mysterious voices of loisaia. Zeena Parkins' song "T-Square" continues to walk all over musical conventions, with amazing musical

contributions by Guy Yarden, Chris Cochrane, and Ikue Mori. Carbon's "Jump Cut" rocks like only they know how to rock, and I do mean rock! This does not mean that your average rock music fan will find much to like about this. Machine Gun offers up one of their unholy jazzrock marriages. The Soldier String Quartet's "The Impossible" is a soulful, jazzy, hoe-down number, delivered as well this string and percussion outfit can do. Elliott Sharp's longtime musical associate David Linton gives the dance music pulse a much needed kick in the ass. The Lois Vierk Ensemble contributes a brilliant almost orchestral piece, that makes a fine finale for the entire collection. (from Koloniester. 25 A, D-1000 Berlin 65, Germany)—G.T.

**Various: *10 ROIR Years*** (ROIR cassette) Ira Robbins has attempted the virtually impossible task of somehow documenting the entire ROIR catalogue on one cassette compilation. He hasn't been particularly successful, but he's produced an interesting tape anyway. There is good music on here by the Dictators, Glenn Branca, Television, Brother Vernard Johnson, the Germs, Flipper, and others. With one exception (the Durutti Column's "Elevator Sequence") nothing here really bothers this listener upon repeated plays. The MC5 cut actually sounds better than I remember the original sounding. Nico's cold sober "All Tomorrow's Parties" is scary even when it doesn't mean to be. But don't buy this cassette, go ahead and spring for the whole batch. The original cassettes these pieces are taken from are all still available from ROIR. The tapes by the Mekons, Television, Branca, the Germs, Flipper, G.G. Allin, Vernard Johnson, and the Buzzcocks are all recommended. There are other worthy releases from ROIR. According to Robbins, at the time of this collection there were 67 ROIR releases in all. Once you have all those you can put together your own best of ROIR compilation. Home taping is killing Ira Robbins! Keep it up. (from 611 Broadway, Suite 41, New York, NY, 10021, USA)—G.T.

**Vertigo** (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.) This is the kind of "new" guitar rock that must be kind of reassuring to old fashioned rockers that want to rally around stuf like Neil Young's latest. With a two guitar clatter battle that takes rock back fifteen years these guys don't offend the sensitive ears of people that yearn for simple days gone by. Nevertheless their assault is interesting enough that I can't hate them for it. This is post-Velvet, post-new, post-no, post-punk postpostpostwave. Those who like to bury everything under a shieldload of similes will have a field day with these guys, but I suggest starting with the Stooges, Television, MX80 Sound, and the Dream Syndicate. Against my better judgement I keep listening to this one. They are the oldest looking band on Amphetamine Reptile, and they sound like it too. (from 2541 Nicolllet

Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Vertigo:** "Rub"/"Murder by Guitar"/"Snakes"/"Smoked" (Amphetamine Reptile 7") More traditional guitar splatting from these guys, this time getting a little bit tiresome for yours truly. The decision to cover "Murder" was a really poor one and the execution of the thing doesn't improve on the situation. "Rub" is pretty good punky noise, but do you really want to pay \$3.50 for one good song by a band that is merely nothing new done competently? (from 2541 Nicollet Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 55404, USA)—G.T.

**Voice Crack:** *Earflash* (Uhlung L.P.) A new album by Voice Crack (aka Norbert Moslang and Andy Guhl) is something we always look forward to around these parts. Everything they've ever done is worth plenty of my precious time and should be worth yours. Over the course of a decade of creative work these guys have developed their own original hard biting approach to music. (Their 1978 FMP release called *Deep Voices* has them doing the free improv thing on standard instruments including the very cool Contrabassclarinet by Norbert.) During the eighties what they call "cracked everyday-electronics" has become a standard, almost a genre unto itself. With this new release a new element has been added to the horrible potion. If I correctly decipher the inscrutable liner notes, "big drum" and "Dr. Rhythm" are played by Knut Remond. Anyway, this new item in their ugly mix is percussion, bashing away furiously or rhythm box clackclackclack. The whole L.P. is a good soundtrack for the new wave war age. The newfangled bottom to the Crack sounds perfectly apropos to these hopeless ears, but I could see it causing quite a stir among some "fans." It could be the biggest thing since the invention of the CD. It could give them a whole new audience. It will break your fucking silly skull if you are not careful. Approach with caution: explosive devices, biological weapons, nuclear bombs, lots more! ahead. (from Voice Crack at Steigerstrasse 8, CH-9000 St. Gallen, Switzerland)—G.T.

**Wimp Factor 14:** "Train Song"/"I'll Send You A Postcard" (Harriet 7") From the same freaky pop netherworld that gives us the likes of Sebadoh, Slint, Pavement and Dairy Queen Empire comes this far fetched boy band on this girl-heavy seven inch label. These tuneless songs are fucked up just enough that you might think it is a manufacturer's defect, but you'll find yourself grooving to it anyway. The lovely nasty handmade covers complete with a railroad flat penny will probably damage the record beyond what the musicians' damaged brains have already done to it. So this is pop art in the process of becoming anti-pop art. (from POB 649, Cambridge, MA,

02238, USA)—G.T.

**Wonderama:** "Padre Pio: The Stigmatist"/"Out of Focus/Gold" (Ajax 7") A rather captivating A-side starts this one out right. "Padre" features some of the coolest wrecked high/lo tech slide guitar of '91, scattered all over the top of this boogie woogie blues thing. Mark Alhadeff's vocals are suitably weird, and the whole band just slams this one out like a dump truck going head on into a brick wall. Subtle it ain't. The B-side is a goofy, grungy cover of two in one heavy metal song. I must have (thankfully) forgotten, having once been well versed in the limited (in more than one way) oeuvres of Blue Cheer and the MC5. No thanks to these guys for bringing back these buxom metal anthems. One good song then, that's not bad for a rock record. (from POB 805293, Chicago, IL, 60680-4114, USA)—G.T.

**Xymalio:** *Best of 86* (Rec Rec cassette) If Royal Trux had sex with the Residents and shipped the offspring off to be raised in Japan this is what the music that kid might make would sound like. This tape contains around fifty songs, each a gentle masterpiece of perversity and wrongheadedness. So no matter how far off in left field or just plain annoying any one piece gets, soon enough it is over and it's on to the next strange creation. The music sounds electronic in form, but electronics of the most primitive, childlike variety. The brain behind these songs must be a mixed up one indeed, but I feel fortunate to get a chance to be exposed to it. You would too, if you gave it half a chance, assuming you are as desperate and confused as I am. (from Rec Rec, Vertrieb, 01/241 50 55, Postfach 717, 8026, Zürich, Switzerland)—G.T.

## Movies



**Dope Guns & Fucking Up Your Video Deck** (Vol. One) If there is one thing that I know less and care less about than compact discs, it is music videos. I don't have cable, don't usually watch T.V., and have seen a grand total of maybe 30 minutes worth of MTV in my entire long and weary life. Christmas day 1990, at my Mother's house, in utter bored desperation, and at her suggestion I turn the television to MTV. They are showing that Bowie & Bing "Peace On Earth"/"Little Drummer Boy" clip. So I switch to "The Fugitive." Jensen is hanging around with a nun who keeps talking a lot about providence. I switch to *Meet John Doe*. Walter Brennan is telling how a little money turns fine good natured folks into healets. I turn off the T.V. A few days later, as if by providence, this videotape shows up in my POB.

This is a worthy follow up to the *Dope, Guns, & Fucking* 7" series from which it takes its name, although it looks more like an Amphetamine Reptile promotional sampler. Unlike the 7" series there are no out-of-house bands and very few musical surprises. With the unfortunate absence

of Boss Hog, the ten bands on the tape include every group that has an LP out on this record label. Watching the video is supposed to make you want to go out and buy one or more of these records kind of like those Warner Brothers Loss Leaders 2-L.P. things. The only difference being that *Fucking Up Your Video Deck* costs a lot more than \$2 and doesn't have cool singer/songwriters like Rod McKuen or Glenn Yarborough.

For my tastes, sitting around watching music videos is not a reasonable thing to do for entertainment. I can't imagine watching this thing more than a few times. Unlike Chuck D and other postmodern folk, if I want to hear Surgery or King Snake Roost, I'll play one of their records. I guess I'm out of touch. But as music videos go, this one is a pretty good one. Still, it is the last thing you are likely to see on MTV. And that is a real shame. With the possible exception of Tar and the God Bullies, all these bands are well worth your rock 'n' roll dollar. For my money, King Snake Roost is one of the best rock bands in all creation as of 1991. Featuring the other great Australian guitarist that plays a Fender Jag, this band is certainly no substitute for These Immortal Souls. But in the overpopulated field of gritty loud noisy rock these guys are unmatched. "Top End Killer" is not on any of their three L.P.s and that is almost reason enough to shell out money for the whole video. The King Snake Roost segment is also one of the strangest on the tape. Just don't expect to get a good look at the band members. The same goes for Helios Creed. Their "The Rant" (another non-L.P. cut) is presented with true-to-form drug oriented distorted images. Most of the rest of the music on this video is straight off the various L.P.s, or else virtually identical alternate takes.

Still sometimes seeing is believing. The God Bullies, whose records don't do a lot for this listener, have here managed to produce an interesting music video. I didn't pay much attention to the Vertigo L.P., in fact, giving it to one of my "fellow LowLife reviewers," (who, of course, never wrote a review of it, probably sold it long ago). After I saw them here I liked them so much I bought their record back. Their video is pretty straight forward concert-type footage. Their music is (2 guitars, drums, no-bass) interesting drony pop, like if Mars had been a top forty new wave band. Surgery delivers their usual trashy rock n roll with suitable footage. The Helmet clip is pretty good, a lot better than having to sit through their whole L.P., with good quick editing that fits nicely with their hard sound and helps mask their nerdy appearance. The Cows video is likewise fun. Halo of Flies and Lubricated Goat also will not letdown anybody that still tolerates this rock n roll stuff. Basically the music is all ok, and the video no eyecore. In between musical clips Amphetamine Reptile fans get to watch Tom

Hazelmeyer's boss as he introduces each band in his suave fashion. (manufactured and distributed by Atavistic Video, POB 578266, Chicago, IL, 60657, USA)—G.T.

**Christopher G. Frier: *The Orbitrons*** (A Ghost Limb film) It is hard for me to resist this ridiculously funny biker/sci-fi noir spoof. Writer and director Christopher Frier does not spare the gore, bad dialog, cheap gimmicks or any other disgusting or stupid thing to keep the "action" going in this weird tale of zombies, evil space creatures, bad cops, and bikers. The editing and scene changes are about as rough as they get, but the story, such as it is, carries the load of maintaining viewer interest. This is ultra low budget filmmaking at it's glorious best. The plot is like some bizarre gulfwar parody, though it was produced and released when George's great victory, was just a twinkle in his squinted eyes.

The story concerns a group of evil aliens that land in a graveyard in beautiful Newark, New Jersey. The ruthless, busty space queen, Starleatha (Diva Haase) is intent on conquering earth: "All kings, presidents and heads of state will become my personal toilet slaves." Her costumes alone are enough to keep most people's attention, but her halted deadpan dialogue is where the real fun begins. Indocinating the recently awakened walking dead into her army, Starleatha speaks: "Be all that you were meant to be. All that you were deprived of in your last incarnation." George Bush or what? "In a word, I'm your father, your mother, and your god." Starleatha's sidekick, pacifist Bizwad (Dave Lancel) is also good for some laughs. He believes Earthlings can be conquered through rationality and good will, but Starleatha will hear nothing of this rubbish. Some hilarious Christ bashing takes place when Bizwad is nailed ignobly to a cross and shits his loin cloth.

Interspersed between the scenes of Bizwad and Starleatha is the real action: seemingly endless footage of the "good guys" Kubash and Kuzui rolling along on their motor-cycles to the strains of "City On Flames" and "White Room." Our all American antihero/masurbator Kubash is played straight and stonified by Lawrence Talbot, who expresses emotions (orgasm, surprise, fear, you name it) by blinking his eyes a lot. It is up to Kubash to save the world from these tormentors from space who remind him of a "republican convention." Certainly he is not getting any help from the pair of super oinkers Konkell and Smoothie who torment him in life and in dreams. Nor does Kubash's biker buddy offer much help (Zenon Kuzui as himself)

when his not too subtle shades of Dennis Hooper character is shortly gobbled up by hungry zombies. Kubash himself reminds me more of Dustin Hoffman than Peter Fonda, and that's probably the biggest compliment this actor will ever receive. But good acting does not necessarily make for an entertaining movie, and for a fun movie with few socially redeeming qualities, you don't get much better than *Orbitrons*. (from POB 3066, Hoboken, N.J., 07030, USA)—G.T.

**Neil Fried: Films at Kläng//11/24/90** On this occasion Neil showed five of his short films (these are 8mm films! not videos) accompanied, as usual, by a bunch of guys playing live music. I think the names of these five are "The Ceremony," "The Jester," "Breakfast," "The Mask," and "The Pink Pig." As far as filmmakers go, Neil is just a babe. Yet, his knack for creating beautiful, thought-provoking, humorous images suggests these are just the first trickling of a wellspring's worth of filmmaking talent. Two of the five shorts ("Ceremony" and "Jester") are disguised as slapstick silents of old Hollywood. Without shame, both recycle the genre style, bizarrely remaking the form, giving a bashing to the content, and coming out looking like a unique byproduct/representation of some depraved, backwoods, postmodern subculture. I suppose, that's exactly what this is, Atlanta not being much to sing about, Bill Taft, Neil Bogan, etc., not being by national standard particularly normal folks.... Again, both films are obviously group efforts, noisy muted sports events happening live on the white screen over there. Those of us who know some or most of the people on the screen will have a different kind of reaction to seeing them in this light, than the rest of you who don't. But none of us should fail to see how simple and good these movies are. The visual text makes written/spoken text obsolete, even if there are a few words. "The Pink Pig" is also funny and great to look at, and features a bit of color, better to behold the pinkness of the pig. It documents the the pink pig ride at Riches department store in downtown Atlanta, a strange, little known outside Atlanta, great American icon. Neil salutes it with appropriate degrees of sincerity and parody. One of the best Neil films I have seen was the oddball, elliptical one called "The Mask" or "Masks." This is also a visually experimental film. That could be said about most of Neil's films, particularly, "The Breakfast" which is, for me, Neil Fried's best yet.—G.T.

**William Wyler: *The Desperate Hours* (1955) and Michael Cimino: *The Desperate Hours* (1990)** Saying that our planet is in bad shape is the sort of obvious, dumb platitude that fanzine writers are fond of spouting. Making connections between the fucked up planet and things in art and vice versa is the bread and butter of criticism everywhere on this same said fucked

up planet. Another thing critics like to do is draw graphs and charts and circles that are supposed to represent people and things in time and show connections between them. Critics are especially crazy about circles. Circles show how society, etc. repeats itself in contempt of time. Some critics like to draw really small circles. These makes for good business because you can sell last year's brand new thing as this years brand new thing. No problem. I usually try to avoid practices of this nature because they bore me so much when I have to read them elsewhere. However, when I recently had the opportunity to see the original version of *The Desperate Hours* by William Wyler one day after I saw the modern version by Michael Cimino, a natural circle formed in my thick head.

Reading the news becomes an ever more painful experience with the passing weeks. Ten years plus of Reagan/Bush is dragging this country (and I guess most of the rest of the world) back into the womb of 1950s America. Our fathers who art in Washington know the difference between right and wrong. The new code is based on authority. The only thing that matters is family, country and God. This is the sacred trilogy, and as with that other trilogy you are thinking about each third reflects and depends upon the other two. The nineteen-nineties are not really the nineteen fifties but the only thing that has really changed are the numbers.

I looked up William Wyler in Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema*. He gets stuck in the "Less Than Meets The Eye" category, which I think is supposed to be overrated directors that suck. He directed drag big budget things like *Ben Hur*, and *Funny Girl*, but he also made Bette Davis' *The Letter* and one really interesting movie called *The Collector*. The latter is thematically similar to *The Desperate Hours* minus the social commentary and pile on the fetishistic sensuality. I don't know too much about Michael Cimino. He doesn't get placed in Sarris' book because I guess he hadn't made any movies by 1967, at least not any that Sarris had bothered to notice. He is the director of such post-1967 biggies as *The Deer Hunter*, *Year of the Dragon*, and *Heaven's Gate*. The last being a giant bomb.

Hakim Bey's "Kop Kulture" (showcased in audio on the *Mighty Risen Plea* compilation L.P.) suggests that we eliminate cops as a subject matter for art. This is a step toward eliminating them from the world at large. This is a great idea that will of course never happen. Cops are the thing that stand between the family and the state.

And cops are the thing that often stands in the way of people like me who don't want to have much to do with things like families and countries even though I belong to one of each. I hate cops more than most of you probably hate cops. Perhaps most people hate cops a little, just like most everybody hates authority a little. But I love to watch movies about cops. I don't usually read books about cops, but many of my favorite movies are about cops, and almost all my favorite Hollywood movies are about cops. I usually cheer for the criminals, but that doesn't make up for the fact that I watch the cops. On the positive side, cop movies do inform potential cop victims, how these scoundrels operate, at least of a glorified Hollywood portrait of their goings-on, but not a clinically accurate representation of state of the art cop technique.

Both versions of *The Desperate Hours* are about cops. (Let's face it both versions are about all the same things. Both are based on a novel of the same name by Joseph Hayes.) More particularly both versions are about families. The story shows how families are ultimately more powerful than cops. Because cops are direct representatives of the state to families this means families are more powerful than the state, that the state somehow rests upon the family. This is the BIG LIE #ONE concocted to sell tickets. After all it is not the state or even cops that is going to make or break a Hollywood movie at the box office. If I can borrow Bey's term, in Kop Kulture the criminal represents the rebel. Inevitably the criminal is beaten by the cop proving that the authority of the state is untouchable. *The Desperate Hours* takes this a "logical" step "forward" and proves that the rebel is no match for the family. This is the BIG LIE #TWO. The story is in brief: three desperate fugitives seek refuge in the quiet suburban home of a typical American family. The cops find out where they are hiding but rather than risk killing the entire family, they agree to let the father of the family try to overpower the criminals in his own way. The man succeeds, proving that the father is the ultimate figure of authority. This is, obviously, the BIG LIE #THREE. The negation of all three lies is there in black and white (and color) in both versions of *The Desperate Hours* if you are looking for it. The family is at the mercy of the state as much as it is at the mercy of the criminals. Only through an ok from a "federal" cop is the family spared. Only when the criminals act out of character is the father able to outwit them. And only through the massive firepower of the cops do the criminals ultimately get dead. Fathers are not killers, so ultimately they have no power.

There are obvious differences in the way these stories are detailed. Mickey Rourke is a far

slicker form of criminal than the old (literally) Humphrey Bogart in his flannels and jeans. Rourke is also depicted as a more insidious, evil character, though both (Bogart and Rourke) try to kill a member of the family when pressed. But Rourke is painted as pure evil. He gets called a "psychopath" by the father and doesn't even take offense. Both actors do a great job, and, if you are like me, they are the reason you will stay awake through these snoozers. Groovy criminals are far more interesting than stupid cops and mushy family units. Rourke is a suave, sophisticated ladies man, but he has no problem killing an innocent man when the time comes. He promises the mother character that they will get to be great friends. Lawyer Kelly Lynch is so hot for him she will do all kinds of ridiculous things on his behalf. Bogart doesn't seem too interested in women, and he doesn't kill anybody in the course of the movie.

Where the major differences between the two movies begins is in the depictions of the families. Apparently, criminals haven't changed much since the fifties, but families have changed quite a bit. Families are still the same size: husband, wife, teenage daughter, and young son, but in the fifties the family unit was intact and unyielding. It's hardly a trace of tension in the Frederic March home. He doesn't want his teenage daughter who looks like she is twenty-five to go out with the feisty young lawyer (Gig Young) who looks like he's about thirty, but in the nineties the family unit is ripping apart at the seams. Anthony Hopkins and his wife are separated and the house is for sale. The teenage daughter (who actually looks like a teenager) will not speak to her father, and she gives mom a hard time too when Anthony's not around. Hopkins doesn't like his daughter's boyfriend either, of course. His objection: the kid is too boring. It takes a traumatic experience like having Mickey Rourke and his two stupid friends invade their home to bring this family back together again. Frederic March gets to prove what a man he is, but his family is only threatened literally (and allegorically) by Bogey and his gang. Anthony Hopkins' family is threatened on all sides, and the boring coot gets a second chance when he proves his fatherly worth by tossing a (suddenly, inexplicably) helpless Rourke out into the yard to be splattered about the lawn by the awaiting horde of machine gun toting cops. The 1990 *The Desperate Hours* comes at an apropos point in history because it reaffirms all those sacred boring all American things (you know: family, country, God) thirty years of rebellion, rock 'n' roll, and drugs have failed to completely stomp out....G.T.

LIVE



Sweet Little Candles/7/21/90/Kiang Debbey Richardson basically solo finally. So we didn't have to watch her yelling at her band members

for fucking up. There was generally less between song talk from Debbey as if she is oddly coming to grips with this live performance thing. What talking there was really funny: "this guitar is a loaner, not that it stays by itself all the time but that I borrowed it from somebody else." She sat on a stool surrounded by menacing little candles in green beer bottles, played electric and acoustic guitar and sang her new (and some old) songs. "Dixie Cups" should be a big hit soon, regardless of the name of the "band" that Debbey plays it as. Most of the rest of the material was still either in the developmental stage or the decomposing stage which meant this was raw and loud, ahhhh... folk music. After the candles burned down, Debbey brought out Fred Ware, who has "played" with Peach of Immortality and the inscrutable Wyfe. Fred sat on the floor and turned on a tape of "samples" of stuff that according to Debbey included bits from Freedom Puff, Cake, and Marc Moore. At this point Debbey stood up without a guitar and sang arms spread and waving. Here I detect the "Athens influence" on Debbey's material. Whatever, this was quite different from anything else I've seen anywhere, and the most "out of character" thing Debbey has done since she spread eggs on her semi-naked self at Nexus a while back. This segment of the performance was really unusual and received reluctant applause when it was over. One person who was standing near me thought it was really bad, but I thought it was honest and moving and surrealistic in a way her guitar stuff could never be. In any other location it would probably never work, but in this environment it worked exceptionally well. It was like watching someone die or give birth.

Suet/7/20/90/KLÄNG George Barker from Tallahassee's Index cassette label and some other guy whose name I didn't get are the two members of Suet. They came a long way with a ton of shit to perform to a very small and unappreciative "audience". Afterwords they didn't seem to hold much of a grudge, which is weird, I think. This show went further toward proving several distressing facts about Atlanta's thriving underground scene. 1.) Musicians in Atlanta who perform or produce what you could categorize as experimental music are not particularly interested in what anybody else is doing. 2.) People in general prefer the safe same sorts of entertainment that they usually get. 3.) Nobody wants to pay \$5 to see something they will probably never get another chance to see or hear, although they will spend lots more than that for a few beers at a bar or to see the Cramps or the Jesus and Mary Chain perform in a way they've performed for years. Suet (or Barker alone?) started the set with a long piece that reminded me a little of something Robert Cheatham might do with Timinus, although it was with little obvious content or emotion. Most of the few in attendance seemed to hate this dialogue between distorted voice and

blinking white light, though I thought it was interesting, at least for a while. The longer/better part of the set was Suet proper, a drum duo with both guys pounding away and doing other things with tapes, reverb, and other instruments. George had a neat collection of drums and other percussion, metal, etc. At one point he even played violin. The other guy had a regular set that was likewise upgraded with metal drums and so forth. He seems to be a pretty good drummer who could play in a rock band. They played "songs," regularly checked their set list, and at one point announced that one piece was a cover. I might have preferred an hour long endless set, but—I can understand why they wouldn't do that.—G.T.

Gallio/Ostrowski/Zimmerlin and Wyman Brantley & David Highsmith//11/29/90// KLÄNG No more Gandharva Consort. OK. By their considerably different standards, these guys are really lightening up. There was not much of the fire and madness I've come to expect from David's end, but I think I actually saw Wyman smile at more than one moment. At another point he nudged David in a playful Borbetomagus way as if to say "relax brother" or "lets dance." The perhaps conservative decision to be a duo and stick to clarinets and such was probably a good choice for these guys at this time. These ramshackle groups where everyone does whatever they want might sometimes be radical concepts, but do not always get anybody anywhere. Sometimes it is necessary to decide what it is you are doing before you can do anything else. Talking about free improvisation in LowLife Godfried of Logos divided the whole thing into two groups of improvisors. One group consists of those who learn everything about one instrument and through mastery give themselves many sounds to those from Godfried himself, Alfred Zimmerlin, and Davey

Williams are examples, I think, of this approach. The other group of improvisors are those who use and play all kinds of instruments and noisemakers and junk, so even if they can only make one sound on each instrument they still have a lot of sounds to choose from. David T. Lindsey Is Bald, Tinnitus in the early days, and Gandharva Consort are, perhaps, good examples of this second group. But these days Wyman and David are going a different way, perhaps on the way to mastery. I suspect instead they are going in a third undefined more poetic direction Godfried couldn't see from over there in Belgium. Minimalism is an application you can apply to music, like tone or pitch or tempo. Constraint is one of the ways people turn "nature" into art. Wyman and David have turned into two smart players, and their wailing bent as hell reed whangings are the model of restraint. They play off each other a lot these days. Wyman especially is a great listener/player. They've also learned to know when to stop. They are remaking the "form" of improvisation into their own thing, in a way that resembles yet remains miles away from the approaches of folks as unlike as Borbetomagus, Voice Crack, the Shaking Ray Lewis, Tinnitus, and Paul Hoskin. These people play this music like it was a genre they made up. In a way that's what it is. So what is the name of this band anyway? Just Gallio or Gallio/Ostrowski/Zimmerlin or Certainty Sympathy. I think it doesn't matter much. The NYC/Zurich/Zurich trio did not play improvised music. Though, if not for the sheet music it would pass in some states. They played a 70 minute (it doesn't seem that long, though) composition which is what is called "Certainty Sympathy." They have a CD of this thing which doesn't have any tracks so you cannot skip around and have to listen to it from the beginning or fastforward tediously. I was


impressed with how closely they have been able to reproduce this complex piece of music, and how alive and fun it is to see/hear "on stage." All three of these guys are great at what they do. The New Yorker, Ostrowski does electronic stuff with synth doodles, sampled organ sounds, feedback and all kinds of funny noises. Live more so than in the studio all this shit really goes well with the comparatively nice polite music that the other two guys are making over there. They too, of course, have lots of wild moments. Zimmerlin, who looks the part of a classical musician from Belgium, especially impressed me with his ability to get all kinds of amazing variations in sound out of his cello. Saxman, "bandleader," Gallio was quite sick on this occasion but still managed to perform beautifully, like Zimmerlin he stretches his instrument a long ways to and fro, throwing in all kinds of melodic bits that pull this work in a swinging direction. I swear at more than one interlude I thought about Mingus, Ellington even.—G.T.

Tinnitus: Times Up/Jerk... Suck//12/21-24/90//kläng The same gang that worked together on the earlier "Theatre Of Displaced Organs" piece came together again to further explore ideas Robert Cheatham has been engaging in since the Helicopter project or birth. "My name is Laura my name is Richard my name is Robert my name is Dea Anne my name is Tim..." Cheatham spent weeks prior to the performance building the large wooden structure of door, steps, platform, and contraption to give the group piece the displacement missing from the previous piece. The finished set transformed the friendly KLÄNG space into something altogether different and unreal. Cheatham said surreal, but then Cheatham says a lot of things. The unprepared audience walks into an alien environment where boredom and

**SKITS**  
(from Sheffield, England)  
with  
**THE SHAKING RAY LEWS**  
**Klang**  
Thursday  
October 25th  
10pm  
improvi



**LADONNA SMITH**  
+  
**DAVEY WILLIAMS**  
as  
**Klinchak**  
**5/5 SAT.**  
**KLÄNG**  
10pm



Available  
Resources  
Band  
with  
Gandharva  
Consort  
9pm  
**KLÄNG** Friday  
13th



**SAT**  
**April 28th**  
**Tinnitus**  
**KLÄNG**






meaninglessness and fear and multiple metaphor and obscenity and metaphysical truth and rapture and confusion all stand waiting to confront their sleepy heads. Times Up/Jerk... Suck is/was a complex piece facing an enormous complexity of subjects. It has no plot. It has no beginning, middle or end. It does not answer any questions, although it asks many. It is not particularly entertaining, though few people that came to it actually got up and left. It is absolutely serious and fairly ridiculous in one blink of the eye. Cheatham and company are mixing their imagery with intense abandon. Richard Gess once told me that he and Robert were "electric Shamans." Times Up/Jerk... Suck trivializes this description. These guys are making direct unabashed appeals to their respective gods. Gess the Flagellant wants penance for his sins. He is hilarious in his humorless suffering role. Obviously Cheatham embraces a different fervor: to the damnable beat of as-close-as he could get to Devil's music, he's reanimated as a shiny onepiece Halloween dark angel. And this Devil's got soul. The rest of the cast are off in their carefully chosen niches exorcising personal psychosis. Laura Ackerman is wonderfully bizarre as the twitching, mugging, schizo Ahearn come-to-life. Dea Ann Martin is a lost, clumsy horned lamb in this conceptual obstacle course, a confused spirit unleashed to overcome the foolish pious Gess. All to a chorus of "fuck, shit, piss, cock, cunt." Public Enemy is along to make sure no one leaves unscathed. Tim Seaton's visual text is the most incongruent of elements in this multi(un)disciplinary symphony of incongruity. It is the one thing that could stand on its own. Also it is what I saw audience members often turning to for relief from the self-righteous

boringness of everything else. It is a spew of crosses and bodies and shadowy religiousness. The effect is strangely entertaining, despite proportionate disadvantages. These images should be eight feet high, but limits of individual technology plague the most interesting of artists. Give them the money allotted to the cowardly "military-industrial complex" and see what happens....—G.T.

The Athens Show: The Woggles & the Jack O Nuts//22/23/91//800 East Down North Highland, on the "other side of the tracks," on the severed end of old East Street lies the cozy little studio. Out back in the garage/barn/annex is where the shows take place. The space is run by a collective arts group that includes arts community folks like Wayne Sizemore, Neil Fried, and Bill Morrar. This was the second night of a two night Athens show that featured a bunch of art hanging on the walls and plopped around in the middle of the L shaped room, as well as the two rock bands. This art was quite a mixed fare, but everybody's favorite seemed to be Curtis Crowe's satire elaborate "Etch a Sketch" piece that sat there on a cement stand begging to be fucked with but remained unaltered when I last looked. So much for the Art Strike. The only art that kept me around through most of the evening were the fine hats worn by Sizemore, Morrar, and other 800 East people. The rest was just so much wall clutter that could have been a Earth Factory, Mattress Factory, Trinity Street, Nexus, you-name-it group show from any date between '81 and '91, which is not to suggest that all art is the same but that all art shows are the same. And a bunch of paintings dangling from cementbrick walls is the last thing I want to stand around pondering

on my Saturday night. I'm sure this strikes most of you as incredibly pedestrian, but in 1991 art just has to do more than hang there on a wall blinking at me like the homely kid that couldn't get anybody to dance with them in high school. Because that is exactly who most of (us?) artists are, and if that's how far we've come in ten, twenty, thirty years of struggling against the conformity of our dominated peers (ie: the kids who did get dance partners), then what is the fucking point? Not to sound too post-toastie, but art must stretch the boundaries of art systems in more ways than simply locating itself in an "alternative" location on a dark street in an unfriendly neighborhood. Though it is now a five minute drive, 800 East is actually two short (one demolished) blocks away from the square plot of grass that used to be Nexus Arts Center, which by almost any standard available was the heart of Atlanta Arts systems both "alternative" and "non-alternative." Yet nothing could save poor misfit art from the wrecking ball. In addition to art, the 800 East shows feature a variety of music and performance. At the Athens shows the featured acts were two bands. The first, the Wobbles, was basic clean cut garage retro. They covered "You're Gonna Miss Me" and "Styichinine" as well as performing a number of presumed originals that sounded pretty much like a zillion other songs. They played forever, and talked a lot about a record and/or records they are putting out or have already put out, and they talked about future shows they already had lined up. At one point a woman with a Grateful Dead skullface on her jeans jacket took off almost all her clothes, but she was not apparently inspired by the music. It must have been the art! When the band finally stopped, audience members clapped. Between bands,

MURRAY  
REAMS + PAUL  
HOSKIN  
with  
Billy Taylor 9 p.m.



KLING  
SATURDAY 4-14

Ice Cream  
& Cake  
Show &



starring Tracy Ferrill  
& Debby Richardson

**KLANG** SATURDAY  
APRIL 21st

1000 Pacific Ave. (entrance through "at around back")

**FUCK**

POTTY  
VARIETY  
ROXYCHAMELEONETC  
GENERIC CORPORATE  
ROCKSCENESHIT  
BOYCOTT  
NEWSOUTH  
OLDSOUTH  
NOSTROY  
NOLNREEVESINSIPDMUSIC  
MONOPOLY  
LOVEISEETHEMOON

Wayne Sizemore gives us a tour of the studios. He has been busy sketching portraits of 800 East people. The atmosphere of this place is open and creative. Wayne even lets Ellen try on a few hats. The next band, the Jack O Nuts, I'd heard on tape before but never managed to see live. They were three guys (bass, guitar, drums) playing loud jazzy metalish original sounding rock, a big relief from the previous yawn inducing "performance." These guys say nothing between songs, except to introduce their guest vocalist, Laura Carter, near the end saying something like "Dyke Woman!" Some of you will recall that Laura used to growl for the Bar-B-Q Killers. Since that band's breakup some time ago, I've heard of various projects that supposedly included Laura, but this is the first one I've actually witnessed. The brevity of Laura's appearance was perhaps disappointing as was her choice of covers ("I Want Candy"), but she still has quite a bit of the badass motherfucker spirit that made even the most sloppy-as-shit Bar-B-Q Killers show, at least interesting. The set was to the point and over before I got bored, and that is saying a lot.—Art Thrasher

**Chuck Oliveros: Order!//KLÄNG//2/28/91—3/3/91** This theatrical performance ran for four nights. I saw the first three performances. According to the cast members, especially actor/writer Oliveros, the first two nights were not so good, in fact, they virtually were dress rehearsals with a (very small) paying audience. The third performance was better attended, and seemed much more satisfactory for the cast members. Actress Loretta Calbro went so far as to say to Ellen, "You finally saw the real thing!" However, things often don't appear as you think they appear. Artists of all kinds always have a very different impression of their own work than the rest of us are likely to have. Oliveros and his two fellow performers (Calbro and William Mobius) were fairly convinced before this thing started that this was going to be rough. At the last minute the actress that was supposed to play Dominique dropped out due to illness, and Calbro joined the cast only a few days prior to the performance. Admittedly, I was able to detect flubbed lines, not just by Calbro. And over the course of the three nights of performances I saw I noted some changes in dialogue, but none of these particularly damaged the quality of the performance, and I thought Calbro was exceptional. The participants were convinced the third night's performance was the best. (I missed the fourth.) But I thought all three performances I saw were good. I enjoyed the second less, mostly because of the seat I chose to sit in. By Kläng standards this was straightforward theatre. Compared to other performances we've seen (Mary Clare Depoy's dance pieces, *Tansgenitalia Regalia*, *Times Up! Jerk... Suck*) where ceremony has transcended narrative, *Order* adheres to the constraints of

the Tragedy. The story is tense, dark, and upsetting, but somehow also really funny, sort of like what might have happened if Kafka produced *The Honeymooners*. Calbro makes her character very real, with a breathless, frightened, vulnerable, warm bodied performance. She is abused and tormented by the male characters. I wonder what Oliveros had in mind having her disrobe mothlike into the blonde redheaded man eating temptress at the end. It is one of the story's weak points. Yet, Calbro carries the scene, managing to be scary and scared at once. She maintains a closeness to an audience that is supposed to forget about itself. Instead, the audience is imputed in the crimes against this female, all the while being on her side. After the second night's performance Calbro went still slightly costumed into the small audience thanking and hugging the few friends and strangers. On the other side of the page, Chuck Oliveros' Translator is another one of those sinister psycho paramilitary bureaucrat monsters Oliveros obviously enjoys portraying so much. He looks like he is having the greatest time of his life, in the play's most heated moment, when he organically assaults Calbro's Dominique, demanding facts, dates, order... You have never seen anything more horrifying. William Mobius' Dutch smirks his way through most of the action. His dumb, distractingly self-centered character is no match for the pseudo-symbolism powered male—female characters that face off in front of him. Nevertheless, it is Dutch that's left standing at the play's end smokeless gun in hand. *Order* is one of the most ambitious works to be unveiled within the confines of Kläng, and it is one that deserves to be seen again at Kläng or elsewhere.—G.T.

**Sonic Youth / Social Distortion / Nell Young / 1/3/91// Omni** I didn't get to go to this show because I had to go to work, but I didn't have to actually be there because I read so much about the show I felt like I was sitting in the front row. The authoritative pen of Chelsea H. Snelgrove of *Creative Loafing* on Sonic Youth: "Their intrepid deconstructions are one of the most potent reservoirs of rock n' roll iconoclasm and liberation on the margins of an otherwise largely anesthetized and commoditized mainstream." Those thought provoking words were written even before the first guitar string was plucked that Sunday night! More reflective and to the point was our grand poohbah of music journalism over at the *Constitution*, Russ DeVault: "Opening acts Sonic Youth and Social Distortion—a pair of young, wild-guitar bands—simply couldn't match the vigor of Mr. Young and Crazy Horse. They banged their guitars on the stage and beat them with drum sticks, but there was no excitement until Mr. Young and Crazy Horse stampeded into their powerful music."—G.T.

Tony Paris / Jon Kincald / Kim Turner / Jeff

**Clark / Mark Methe / Sean Bourne / Richard Ingram / etc. // The Point // 5/4/91** All these drunks, guest list hounds, scammers, and many others including Ellen and I got in free to the Point on this occasion to see an acoustic set by David Thomas and Jim Jones at this "exclusive." "invitation only" gathering, that was part of one of those pre-tour/pre-release promotional trips that big record companies like to sponsor. Although, many people arrived after the brief set was over and almost everyone seemed more interested in the free beer and free food than in Pa David's curious set, the live music was actually well worth braving the climate of the Point. Excess is the rule of the game at these sort of gatherings. So while homeless people pleaded for change for food within yards of the Point front door, record industry hangers-on were treated to piles of fried chicken, corn-on-the-cob, potato salad, and white rolls. People who have probably never heard the original version of "Final Solution" parked their automobiles beneath stenciled graffiti "Please Don't Feed the Winos" and went inside to be supplied by Polygram to all the free booze they could suck up their greedy spouts. What I estimate at 75 copies of the latest Pere Ubu release (*Worlds In Collision*) were scooped up in armloads, and, by the time we left, were all gone. To the contrary, well-fed David and Jim performed a rather sparse 20 to 30 minute set of Ubu songs on accordion and acoustic guitar without microphones or a stage. Songs included a strolling minstrel version of the above mentioned "Final Solution" sans any "German" mentions. Afterwards David mingled with the masses to the strains of *Worlds In Collision* over the PA, and no this guy is not a humble man, but I guess, that goes without saying.—G.T.

## Piss And Jism Top Twenties 1990

Lang Thompson's

Biota: *Tumble* (Recommended/Cuneiform CD)  
Hlios Creed: *Boxing the Clown* (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.)  
Fred Frith: *Step Across the Border* (ESD L.P.)  
The Kronos Quartet: *Black Angels* (Nonesuch L.P.)  
Material: *Seven Souls* (Virgin)  
Morphogenesis: *Prochronisms* (Pogus Productions L.P.)  
Ministry: *In Case You Didn't Feel Like Showing Up* (Sire L.P.)  
PFS: 279 (Cuneiform L.P.)  
The Pixies: *Bossanova* (4AD/Elektra L.P.)  
Public Enemy: *Fear of a Black Planet* (Def Jam/Columbia L.P.)  
Pussy Galore: *Historia de la Musica Rock* (Caroline L.P.)  
Pylon: *Chain* (Sky L.P.)  
Railroad Jerk (Matador L.P.)  
Sonic Youth: *Goo* (DGC L.P.)

Le Syndicat: *Delikatessen/Vorgine/Relapse* (RRR L.P.)  
 Cecil Taylor: *In Florencia* (A&M)  
 Television Personalities: *Privilege* (Fire L.P.)  
 Urge Overkill: *Americruiser* (Touch & Go L.P.)  
 Neil Young & Crazy Horse: *Ragged Glory* (Reprise)  
 John Zorn: *Naked City* (Nonesuch L.P.)

#### Jennifer Moore's

1. Sept. 1, 1990: The day I became much Moore.
2. Robert Johnson: *The Complete Recordings* (Columbia 3 L.P.)
3. *Dope, Guns & Fucking In The Street Vol. 1, 2, & 3* (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.)
4. Tad: *Salt Lick* (Sub Pop L.P.)
5. Cows: *Slapback* (Amphetamine Reptile 7")
6. Amphetamine Reptile Box Set (Amphetamine Reptile 7" box)
7. Babes In Toyland: *Spanking Machine* (Twin Tone L.P.)
8. Lou Reed/John Cale: *Songs For Drella* (Warner Brothers L.P.)
9. Neil Young: *Ragged Glory* (Reprise L.P.)
10. King Snake Roost: *Ground Into the Dirt* (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.)
11. Public Enemy: *Fear of a Black Planet* (Def Jam/Columbia L.P.)
12. Nirvana (Sub Pop 7")
13. *Dope, Guns, & Fucking In The Streets Vol 4* (Amphetamine Reptile 7")
14. Pussy Galore: *Historia de la Musica Rock* (Caroline L.P.)
15. Boss Hog: *Cold Hands* (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.)
16. Dinosaur Jr. 7"
17. Ice T
18. Holy Rollers: *As Is* (Dischord L.P.)
19. the incarnation of I See The Moon, Magic Bone, and Gutterplow
20. Gutterplow tape

#### David T. Lindsay's

1. Ut: *Griller* (Blast First! L.P.)
2. Dan Clowes: *Eight-Ball comic*
3. *Ignorance vs. Arrogance*: video by Andrea Tomasovsky
4. the Melvins
5. Dirt
6. Beasts of Bourbon: *Black Milk* (L.P.)
7. Lunachicks: *Babysitters On Acid* (Blast First! L.P.)
8. Hole: *Retard Girl* (7")
9. L7
10. the Jesus Lizard at the 40 Watt in Athens
11. Sewer Trout
12. Cringer: *Karin* (Lookout E.P.)
13. God: *For Lovers Only* (Au Go Go L.P.)
14. Babes In Toyland at Masquerade
15. La Sect Rouge: *Frank* (L.P.)
16. Monsula
17. Liquor Ball 45
18. owning the best goddamn car in existence: it's big, bulky, doesn't have any heat and looks as though it's been underwater for twelve years

19. Some Velvet Sidewalk: *Appetite For Extinction* (Communion/K L.P.)
20. the reappearance of the Zodiac Killer

#### Andy Pierce's

1. Billy Taylor: Wyfe, Chinny Chin Chin, and solo 1/8 the Shinehead O'Conner of the 90s
2. live sets at Kläng, shitty bars & closets:
- Kevin Dunn, Sugarclubs, City of Lindas, Heavy Ethyl, Nerve Clinic, Cake, Tinnitus, S.R. Levis, Judy Dunaway & Evan Gallagher Little Band, Kevin Haller, And & Was, Drake Scott
3. Hakim Bey & Sue Ann Harkey: "Kop Kulture"
4. *Signifying Rappers* book by two white guys
5. Sweet Sweetbacks Baadassss Song on video tape
6. Yawn
7. Plaster Cramp Press
8. Public Enemy: "B-Side Wins Again" & "Anti-Nigger Machine"
9. Robert Cheatham: *Anomalous Propagations* book
10. Fred Frith: "Mirror/Dark as a Match"
11. Destroy All Music month of guest jocks
12. Automeidia
13. Festival of Swamps (espec. Drake's march & Liazon Wakest)
14. discovering Bern Porter
15. thirty terrifying minutes in mid-town Manhattan
16. faith in the almighty
17. 3 Teens Kill 4, Pop Group, & Rip Rig and Panic 10 yrs too late
18. Charlie Nash's Queer & Carol Schneck's AIDS writings
19. M.C. Hammer's trousers
20. Danny Wahlberg's attempt at facial hair

#### George Williams'

- Bongwater: *Too Much Sleep* (Shimmy Disc L.P.)  
 Jane's Addiction: "Stop"  
 The Lemonheads: *Lovely* (L.P.)  
 No Walls at the Variety Playhouse  
 Jack Black Factory: *House Blessing* (L.P.)  
 Lee Atwater's brain tumor  
 Kronos Quartet: "Marquee Moon"  
 Go Devils: "Slob"  
 Queer Nation at Jack's N' Jill's  
 Insane Jane: *Green Little Pill* (L.P.)  
 Lou Reed/John Cale: "A Dream"  
 Cowboy Junkies: "Powderfinger"  
 Jawbreakers: *Unfun* (L.P.)  
 Sonic Youth: "Tunic"  
 Harvey Gantt  
 Grant Hart: *Intolerance* (S.S.T. L.P.)  
 Neil Young: "Why Do I Keep Fucking Up"  
 Georgia State Lyceum film schedule  
 Sweet Auburn Street Festival  
 Enormous recycling bins at Dekalb Farmer's Market

#### Dean Clyne's

- Gutterplow live at Capos  
 the Jesus Lizard: *Head* (Touch & Go L.P.)

#### Mercyland live in Nag's Head N.C.

- Opal Foxx brunch  
 Sonic Youth: *Go* (Geffen L.P.)  
 The Cows: *Slapback* (Amphetamine Reptile 7")  
 Babes In Toyland: *Spanking Machine* (Twin Tone L.P.)  
 Nick Cave: *The Good Son* (Mute L.P.)  
 Verlaines: *Some Disenchanted Evening* (Homestead L.P.)  
 Teenage Fanclub: *Catholic Education* (Matador L.P.)  
 Jonestown: *Sugarship* (Project A-Bomb 7")  
 Walt Mink (Skeme 7")  
 Eno/John Cale: *Wrong Way Up* (Warner Brothers L.P.)  
 Lubricated Goat at the Masquerade  
 Silverfish: *Cockeye* (Touch & Go L.P.)  
 Dickless (Sub Pop 7")  
 Pooh Sticks: *Formula* (Sympathy L.P.)  
 Pixies: "Born In Chicago"  
 Blood Poets live in Purgatory  
 the Jesus Lizard live at Center Stage

#### Jon Kincaid's

1. The Death of Elvis by Charles C. Thompson II & James P. Cole (book) Elvis had a 5" diameter colon, was packed full of shit, was reading pornography, and couldn't tell the difference between codeine and Dilaudid: the king of rock n roll indeed...
2. Van Morrison at Lakewood 9/4/90—could have done without the Tonight Show version of "Moondance"
3. My Evil Twin at Masquerade 5/17/90—for twenty-two minutes as good as any other Atlanta band this year, then we did that "Bo Diddley" deal and...
4. The Fans reunion 5/15/90 at Center Stage
5. Graduating 12/15/90
6. watching "superstar" Bobby Brown try to sing backing vocals with "has been" Bertie Higgins while wondering why both he and I were there at the Egyptian Ballroom 10/31/90
7. thinking Isaac Hayes would be a more believable champion at a sneak preview of Rocky V
8. Sonic Youth: *Go* (Geffen L.P.)
9. Nikkii Sudden's four million local shows, but the acoustic one at WREK (4/22/90) sticks out
10. Mazzy Star: *She Hangs Brightly* (L.P.)
11. realizing that the WREK studios (where Ray Charles recorded "I Got A Woman" on 11/18/54) were as historically important (and bigger) than the Sun Studios I paid to see.
12. Bewitched: *Brain Eraser* (L.P.)
13. all the issues of *Conflict* I didn't read because I didn't see them
14. Another Halloween passed without G.G. Allin killing himself or any members of the Black Crows
15. my luxurious 15 minute trip through Arkansas
16. Steve Albini's live mix for the Jesus Lizard
17. my car finally dying R.I.P.
18. Buck Snort, Tennessee
19. the Jody Grind—they still haven't recorded their best stuff
20. Bret Elliot Easton (or whatever the guy's name is who wrote *Less Than Zero*): his new book that I haven't read and can't remember the

name of (I think it's *American Psycho*)—any book about skinning people alive sounds ok for mass culture to me, maybe he could ghost the G.G. Allin autobiography

#### Marc Moore's

1. Sebadoh: *Weed Forestin'* (Homestead L.P.) plus 7", tapes, comp. etc.
2. Urrest: *Kustom Karnal Blaxploitation* (Caroline L.P.)
3. Jamier: *Somebody In The Snow* (Corwood L.P.)
4. Todd Newman and the Leatherwoods "Downside of an 8-Ball" (7")
5. The Deadbeats: "I Can See It From the Rocks" (Vacant Lot 7")
6. The Chills live and *Submarine Bells* (L.P.)
7. The Verlaimes: *Some Disenchanted Evening* (Homestead L.P.)
8. Urge Overkill: *Americruiser* (Touch & Go L.P.)
9. Prison Shake: *I'm Really Fucked Now* (Scat 7"/CD/cassette/L.P. set)
10. Dwarves: *Blood, Guts and Pussy* (Sub Pop L.P.) and live
11. Teenage Fan Club: *Catholic Education* (Matador L.P.)
12. *Disaster* magazine
13. Nick Drake
14. Urinals bootleg/reissue 7"s
15. going to Memphis
16. my burgundy 1971 Gibson 335 semi-hollow body guitar with Gibson insignia on the pickups and original parts
17. Pussy Galore: *Historia de la Musica Rock* (Caroline L.P.)
18. having a car
19. playing in a band
20. going to D.C.

#### Ellen McGrail's

1. DQE: *N Is For Knowledge* (Bangaway cassette)
2. *Railroad Jerk* (Matador L.P.)
3. Laughing Hyenas: *Life of Crime* (Touch & Go L.P.)
4. *Bring The Noise* (LowLife compilation cassette)
5. Jane Campion's *Sweetie* (film)
6. Ut: *Griller* (Blast First! L.P.)
7. Jesus Lizard at the Center Stage with Dirt and Sonic Youth
8. Pussy Galore: *Historia de la Musica Rock* (Caroline L.P.)
9. *Is-Ex-Splue* (Vision L.P.)
10. Dirt: "Cleft On the Chin" (Worry Bird 7")
11. Jody Grind: *One Man's Trash Is Another Man's Treasure* (Db L.P.)
12. Jesus Lizard: *Head* (Touch & Go L.P.)
13. The Ex: *Joggers & Smoggers* (The Ex L.P.)
14. Fat: *Hit* (There L.P.)
15. Silverfish: *Cockeye* (Touch & Go L.P.)
16. Red Transistor: "Not Bite" (Ecstatic Peace 7")
17. Beat Happening: "Red Head Walking" (K 7")

18. *Dope Guns & Fucking Up Your Video Deck* (Amphetamine Reptile video)
19. David Lynch's *Wild At Heart* (film)
20. Lubricated Goat: *Psychedelicates* (Amphetamine Reptile L.P.)

#### Glen Thrasher's

1. Jandek: *Somebody In The Snow* (Corwood L.P.)
2. Elliott Sharp: *KILL!AIV!* (Newport Classic Premier CD)
3. Rune Lindblad: *The Death of the Moon* (Pogus Productions L.P.)
4. Ut: *Griller* (Blast First! L.P.)
5. D.Q.E.: *N Is For Knowledge* (Bangaway cassette)
6. Laughing Hyenas: *Life of Crime* (Touch & Go L.P.)
7. 16-17: *When All Else Fails* (Vision L.P.)
8. Cop Shoot Cop: *Consumer Revolt* (Circuit L.P.)
9. Caroliner: *I'm Armed With Qts.* of *Blood* (L.P.)
10. Judy Dunaway (Lost CD)
11. Cannanes: *Love Affair With Nature* (L.P.)
12. Voice Crack: *Earflash* (Uhang L.P.)
13. Blowhole: *Guerilla Jazz* (cassette)
14. *Real Estate—New Music From New York* (Ear-Rational compilation CD)
15. Some Velvet Sidewalk: *Appetite For Extinction* (Communion/K L.P.)
16. The Ex: *Joggers & Smoggers* (Ex 2 L.P.)
17. Royal Trux: *Twin Infinitives* (Drag City L.P.)
18. Crawling With Tarts: *Greed Tool Hand In Lee Of Icebergs* (ASP cassette)
19. Sauter/Dietrich/Moore: *Barefoot In The Head* (Forced Exposure L.P.)
20. Daniel Johnston: *1990* (Shimmy Disc L.P.)



It is an embarrassment to alternative journalism everywhere, for a newspaper so perceptive on issues of the day as the *Village Voice* to continue to publish a "rock critic's survey" as backwards and gangly as the esteemed Christgau poll. Out of forty L.P.s that finished in Pazz & Jop this year, there is not one independent release, and that is pretty embarrassing in a year when there was a flood of indie releases that far outshine Pazz and Jop finishers like Sinéad O'Connor, Living Colour, the Replacements, Jane's Addiction, Faith No More and the Black Crowes. LowLife contributor George Williams suggests America's rock critic establishment is just too old to be attuned to what's really going on. Only a bunch of aging hippies would still worry about a moot point like whether or not rock music is dead as we come over the crest into 1991. Gina Arnold gives her generation away when she says 7th graders "think of sloppy long-haired guy bands with guitar players in them like how we thought of Patti Page and Pat Boone or something." (*italic mine*) Who is this we anyway? When I saw *The Cross & the Switchblade* in grammar

school I thought it was pretty heavy, although my older sisters always made fun of Pat for wearing white shoes. When I first started going to shows long hair and guitar bands were considered way out of vogue by me and most of my friends. When Paul Lenz (who was later in Drivin N Rhythm right up till when they got signed) joined Atlanta's pivotal band Vietnam in 1981, Stan Satin and Drew Davison made fun of his long hair constantly, calling him a girl and a hippie until he cut it.

I know that some of these Pazz & Jop voters are younger than I am, and I'm also pretty sure quite a few of them didn't vote on a lot of the junk that finished in the poll. There simply are too many voters these days for the poll to matter anymore. Maybe it never mattered. At least in the late 70s/early 80s we usually got a glimpse at Lester Bangs' ballot. Lester always did cool stuff like put *Metal Machine Music* or *Metal Box* or something nasty like that at number one with 30 points. In the days when the P&J sample was smaller a big push like that could really make a difference. The bigger the sample the more dubious the results. Look at what the overwhelming majority of Americans are thinking right now according to the polls. How could 289 rock critics possibly get something right, much less screw in a light bulb. We've kept our LowLife sample small mostly because we're lazy, but if we tallied the votes I think Neil Young or Public Enemy or Sonic Youth would still come close to first. *Songs For Drella* would also be in there somewhere, but that's about where the shared territory between Pazz & Jop and Piss & Jism ends, thankfully. Next to the Robert Johnson box, the best major label record I heard from 1990 was Ice Cube's *Amerikkka's Most Wanted* which didn't place in any of the LowLife ten best lists. Pazz & Jop contributors whine about the dichotomy between guitars and samplers (and rock and rap) and long for a band that combines the best of both worlds, yet they ignore the NYC band that's already doing that—Cop Shoot Cop—without even bothering to have guitars. Why is it that white rock critics want to put rap and rock into separate envelopes? They have different histories only if you want them to. And rock was never about guitars, any more than samplers are in opposition to them.

Also conspicuously absent for a pop music survey of 1990: the Ex, Beat Happening, the Cannanes, the Jesus Lizard, Laughing Hyenas, King Snake Roost, Pussy Galore, Fugazi, the Holy Rollers, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Railroad Jerk... These are just the ones that I like, and I don't even consider myself a pop music fan, much less a pop music critic. These Pazz & Jop people are talking about samples yet there is nary a mention of people who are actually attempting to advance the sampler form beyond what has been done to death by hip hop to a

degree second in hum drums only to sloppy long-haired guy bands with guitars: Elliott Sharp, Zeena Parkins, John Oswald, Smegma, Nicolas Collins, Biota, Machine Gun...

LowLife people are quite a different lot. In the first place this is not a rock critics' poll at all. As far as I know, only three of our list givers have published any "rock criticism" outside of LowLife. (David Lindsay, Lang Thompson, and George Williams.) Two of them are or were members of a rock band called Dirt and don't write "rock criticism" at all. (Dean Clyne and Jennifer Moore.) The rest are just friends of mine who have sometimes published stuff in LowLife and have lives of their own that extend way beyond justifying why people listen to popular music or buy the kinds of music they do, which seems to be what the "rock critic establishment" has come to at age twenty five. The percentage of independently released recordings to major label recordings seems to be pretty high among LowLife voters, and nobody voted for Sinéad O'Connor. Although George Williams did vote for Jane's Addiction. Disappointingly, the only LL voters who completely ignored the majors were Ellen, Marc and yours truly. Andy Pierce didn't vote on much that was music, but one of his few musical choices was Public Enemy. The longhair guitar stuff that had such a poor showing among the Pazz & Jop crowd did very well with the LowLife voters. Also for stuff that's reputed (correctly) to be so sexist, those Amphetamine Reptile/Touch & Go/Sub Pop type bands did pretty great with our (two) female voters. Jennifer Moore (who plays guitar in a band with some sloppy boys) also voted on two rap records which should tell you something about that rock/rap dichotomy.

As I type these lists it occurs to me how absurd they really are. Especially funny is Jennifer's placement of her marriage to Damen just above all those Amphetamine Reptile records. Then there's Jon's placement of golden oldie Van Morrison above his graduation from college. So why do you think it took Jon ten years to do it. Then again, my listing of nothing but music releases makes my life look bleakly narrow by comparison. I wanted to list my twenty favorite records because records (and cassettes and CDs) are things I know about. I only saw about five 1990 movies and only read about three 1990 published books, so I don't know enough about those things. But there are a lot of things that are more important than records. The most important things to me are the people I know—the friends and acquaintances I have that make life more tolerable. So I decided to make a list of my top twenty human beings of 1990. The following people are all so great they deserve huge cash awards. The envelopes please: 1. Ellen McGrail 2.) all other past and current members of I See The Moon [Meg, Sheila, Ian, Marc, & Witt] 3.) Debby Richardson 4.)

Dennis Palmer 5.) Murray Reams 6.) Don Weston 7.) Rob Gibson 8.) Bill Waters 9.) Tim Seaton 10.) Jennifer, Dean & John of Dirt 11.) Ron Lessard 12.) Doug Deloach 13.) Robert Cheatham 14.) Wyman Brantley 15.) Paul Hoskin 16.) Roger Turner 17.) Chris Verene 18.) Bob Stagner 19.) Anthony Braxton 20.) Tracy Terrill—G.T.

## The Cold War Is Over

(The following piece, written at my request, is Murray Reams' tale of his trials and tribulations during his tour of spring '90. The tour came in two hunks: first, the northeast wing with the fourpiece, Mouthball (Reams, Paul Hoskin, Jeffrey Morgan, and Charley Rowan), and then a second, southern jaunt as a duo with Hoskin that brought them to Klang. If Murray's text is a bit disjointed, well that's the way life is sometimes, now isn't it?—G.T.)

THE COLD WAR IS OVER/over and over,  
deja vu vu vu—

New York City is the worst place in the world to try to accomplish anything. The simplest, most mundane proceedings turn into nightmarish hassles and haggings that require superhuman strength to resolve. The problem at hand is the need to transport the quartet to Pittsburgh, Buffalo and Boston, then back to NYC for Hoskin to return to work on Monday. It's Friday morning and as usual we're still struggling with details after months of preparation. We get offered the use of a van but the driver has to come along because of the vehicle's idiosyncrasies. This means we have to pay his expenses (our gross expected take for the trip is slightly more than \$200) as well as assuming responsibility for any repairs that might be necessary along the way. Eventually even this non option falls through. We decide that the name was the omen—Mouthball—small, deadly, repugnant. Most of us have resolved at some point along the way to never undertake a tour project like this again. The planning alone involved a massive tangle of cross country letters and phone calls as we consistently rerouted and regrouped to accommodate schedules. Mouthball—put it away in a closet and never bring it out.

Costa Rica has resisted American pressure to form a militia for many years, only recently agreeing to allow a portion of their police force to be trained by the US in response to the increasing "drug crisis" (prior requests having been in reference to control of potential subversive elements). Recently the American-trained force embarked on a marijuana raid which resulted in the death of a twelve year old boy, although no marijuana or other drugs were ever found.

U.S. training had instructed then to shoot

through a doorlock numerous times, when breaking down the door was impossible. The boy was positioned on the opposite side of the door. The U.S. continues to deny involvement amid allegations from Costa Rican officials.

"We're cruising at 70 plus and the Pennsylvania State Police are beside us, behind us and beside us again. In five minutes there are five cars and seven officers at the scene—everyone but us has shotguns. In five more minutes I'm standing handcuffed in the rain because all four of us can't crowd into the back seat of the arresting officers car. Although I can see my jacket on the rear of the car, I can't move because there's a shotgun pointed at me. (Later I learn that the other three also had a loaded gun pointed at them—unattended, with the safety off.) Because we had handed over the pot immediately (a total of less than an ounce between the four of us) we are assured that things will go easily for us, and it is implied that we may even be able to make the gig in Pittsburgh. When offered the alternatives we elect to have the car towed to Donegal, wherever the hell that is.

Hoskin and I are fifteen minutes out of Chattanooga when the car stops rumbling. I get out and see the alternator hanging on the ground and we decide there's no way we can make it. It's a few minutes before seven and the gig starts at seven-thirty. We couldn't work out the schedule to do the southern gigs with the quartet so Hoskin and I are to play duet in Chattanooga and Atlanta. Incredibly, someone stops to offer help and Hoskin rides into town to call Bob Stagner to pick us up. I sit idly by the road and absurdly repeat the line that's stuck in my head like a nail—"Ice Cube will swarm on any motherfucker in a blue uniform." (Hoskin's revenge for our arrest has been to listen to NWA at full volume once or twice a day since our release from jail.) Today, at least, there's no rain and it's quite pleasant by the road. (My first breakdown had occurred outside Pittsburgh on my way back from taking Morgan to catch his flight home. This had involved walking two miles in the pouring rain, falling down a huge roadside hill several times and spilling gasoline over myself before realizing that the car did not need gas, then waiting three hours for the patch up job, which had gotten us this far.) After a few minutes a gangly young guy in a red ball cap stops and offers to help. When I explain the situation he promises to pray for me and invites me to a local revival. I thank him, return to the grassy hill by the road and decide that I don't care whether we make the gig or not. Eventually, we do—Bob and Paul show up at 7:10, we transfer the equipment from car to car, race across town and set up, guzzle a beer and start to play ten minutes late. In Chattanooga Hoskin and I read in the paper about cops who dress up as dealers and arrest people as they attempt to purchase drugs.

"Are you going to pace the whole time?" Hoskin asks. "Yes," I reply. "I'm going to sleep," he responds. We've been in handcuffs for about eight hours at this point and my shoulders are on fire. My arms are so uncomfortable that I begin to break into a sweat as I pace our "cell"—right out of some Hank Williams biography, a five by nine concrete hole with a concrete (concrete!) slab protruding from the wall. Hoskin lies down on the slab and goes to sleep—in three minutes he is snoring. I go into utter incredulity to awe in about 30 seconds. The guy is totally and irrevocably cool. He refuses to consider a negative outcome and constantly enjoins me to look upon the experience as an adventure. We're waiting for the magistrate to set our bail and ultimately decide if and for how long we are going to jail, and I'm conjecturing fifty thousand possible outcomes. I have absolutely no idea where we are. None of us has ever been arrested before or has the slightest idea what is going to happen. "Pablo," Charley calls from the next cell. "He's asleep," I say.—Murray Reams



Skits In The South (22/10/90 to 28/10/90) - Some Notes

Skits consists of Linda Lee Welch on voice and various small instruments and me on guitar and mandolin. We are based in Sheffield in South Yorkshire. The duo came into being as a result of our wish to perform improvised pieces which incorporate aspects of performance art and poetry/prose as well as music. The idea for this trip came up early in 1990. We are very grateful to Yorkshire Arts for providing funds which made the venture possible.

Our first experience after stepping over the threshold between the airplane and The Land

Of The Brave And The Free is of disembodied voices. The first voice offers advice on the use of the escalator and tells us not to smoke. The second voice explains the potential hazards of using the airport train in an attractive metallic monotone.

On leaving Atlanta airport, we board one of the small buses which operate the airport/city shuttle service. The other passengers get off at the Hilton, the Hyatt-Regency and other such high-class establishments. Our destination is the Greyhound station, and we are the last to disembark. The time is about 11:30 p.m. The atmosphere of the bus station is radically different to that in the airport. In order to use the restroom (must get used to this euphemistic term for a lavatory) I must first obtain a token from the clerk. On gaining access to the restroom, I discover that a young man has strategically placed himself in front of the hand dryer. When I make it apparent that I wish to use the dryer, he steps aside and explains that he needs money in order to buy food and that he is on his way to visit a sick relative. As a result of feeling intimidated by this alien environment, I succumb and give him one dollar. His gratitude seems out of all proportion to the size of the donation. I am quite relieved when we eventually board the bus at a little after midnight and set off for Greensboro, North Carolina.

About nine hours later, we are very pleased to see Murray Reams' car pulling into the bus station parking lot. I don't know where these preconceptions come from, but I did not expect Murray to be such a big man. My previous contact with him had been via his excellent cassette tapes (Sound and Fury). We are made to feel very welcome at Murray and Lena's wonderful house. I could not think of a better first stop for this trip. The performance that night at the Artist's League Gallery is before a small audience (a common experience for improvising musicians and one that does not worry us unduly). The following day we play as a trio in Murray's basement studio with Murray on percussion. We are quite taken with Greensboro and are particularly grateful to Lena for introducing us to Sierra Nevada beer. The English are terrible beer snobs.

Next morning we are heading back to Atlanta to play at Klang with the Shaking Ray Levis. The last time I met Dennis Palmer was in London in 1988 at Derek Bailey's Company Week. Glen Thrasher meets us at the bus station. We set up at Klang, and then go to eat at an Indian Restaurant. After chatting to one of the waiters, we are staggered to discover that he too is from Sheffield and that his brother manages a Sheffield restaurant which we are very familiar with. We promise to pass on a message. The Shaking Ray Levis play a cracker of a set. This is the first time I've seen Dennis play with his

partner Bob Stagner on drums. We play our set and then do a quartet with Dennis and Bob as a finale. The quartet finds itself drawn towards a waltz of Viennese splendor which is where we finish.

Glen Engstrand had kindly driven over from Birmingham in order to take us back there for our next performance. The drive from Atlanta to Birmingham is hugely entertaining as a result of Glen's wit and seems to pass in no time. LaDonna Smith's home is like a Southern dream house to me with its two vintage swings on the front porch. LaDonna and Davey Williams played in Sheffield in 1985 when they were touring with one of John Russel's Qua Qua ensembles. I later became re-acquainted with LaDonna at the Company Week where I met Dennis Palmer. Unfortunately it appears that a computer malfunction has prevented the publicity for tonight's performance from being mailed out. Luckily the Neighborhood Improvisors Unlimited (who play the first set) are a very good audience. Our set seems to go down fairly well and the night finishes with an anarchic free-for-all.

Our final gig is at the Nirvana Gallery in Montgomery. This is actually Davey and LaDonna's date, and they have kindly invited us to play on it. Davey warns us that this is the first event of this kind to be staged in Montgomery, and that there may not be a great deal of interest. The performance space at Nirvana is a "court-yard" with high walls on all four sides. It feels like a room until you look up and see the night sky. As time goes on, more and more people file into the yard resulting in what amounts to a huge crowd by improvised music standards (about sixty or seventy). Dave and LaDonna play their set—I do like Davey's guitar playing very much. The set incorporates a wide range of superb material. Skits play a shot set, and we then play a couple of quartet pieces with Davey and LaDonna. The music goes down a storm. There is a great deal of interest from the audience, many of whom want to talk about the performances with us after the show. We are particularly impressed with the variety who make up the audience and interested to note that the majority would identify their backgrounds as being in the visual arts. We drive back to spend our last night in Birmingham and the last night of the musical half of this trip. We can't believe how well the whole thing has gone, particularly in view of the venture's very tenuous beginnings earlier in the year. As well as those I've mentioned, we met many other great people on this trip, they know who they are, and we thank them very much. I must end by expressing my sincerest gratitude to LaDonna Smith, Davey Williams, Murray Reams, Glen Thrasher, and Dennis Palmer; without their help and interest we would still be sitting in Sheffield wondering if this trip would be possible.—John Jasnoch

## Pat Thomas

"Growing up, my brothers and I all had cassettes and records, and you could stand on the landing and hear James Brown, Jimi Hendrix and Derek Bailey, all at the same time."

Pat Thomas is a tall black piano player from near Oxford. He has huge hands (all the better to play enormous clusters) and has a laugh that can blow the roof off a London cab. Well, almost. "I assumed when I was young that by the time I was the age I am now, I'd be a huge mega-star. I had no intention of playing squeaky-bonk music."

But fate intervened when P.T. bought an anthology of jazz piano. "The album had ragtime, Monk and Bud on it, and one Cecil Taylor track—"Port of Call." All I had heard about Cecil was, 'this guy's trying to sound like Bartók.' But after hearing that, I knew that that was what I wanted to do. The idea of playing tunes was much less interesting."

He studied Sun Ra's electronic keyboard playing closely, to the extent of working out that the Brother From Another Planet H.A.T. to be playing with the backs of his hands. P.T.'s electric playing has a freedom and directness inspired by Mr. Ra, who in turn may well have checked out Slim Gaillard's upside-down conceptions.

All the music pouring out of Thomas brothers' respective rooms became the roots of their group M4, tapes of which show strong leanings in dozens of directions—funk, reggae, Ornette Coleman. European improvisors like The Music Improvisation company—all held together by the unflappable bass lines of Nelson Benjamin.

At Bracknell festival one year, seeing horrified Oregon fans running from a tent in terror, Pat immediately ran INTO the tent to be confronted with The Recedents—a trio playing impassioned, belligerent electronic improvisations. "They turned my head around at Bracknell. I knew I wanted to play with those guys." P.T. now works with all of them—Loi Coxhill, Roger Turner, but particularly guitarist Mike Cooper. When John Zorn used turntable/hip hop Whiz Kid for some of his Locust Socus record, Cooper and Thomas formed a band extending those ideas, and the current band can be heard on the Nato records compilation Spirou. Like all the tracks on this record, it's (somehow) based on a Dupuis comic strip, in this case Jijé's Jerry Contre KKK. It's also the only Pat Thomas on record. Maybe Derek Bailey will issue tapes of this year's Company shows where P.T. got to play with longtime heroes like Louis Moholo. But Thomas's duo

with stupendous young drummer Mark Sanders impressed Evan Parker enough to include it in a future large recording project, and P.T. is still involved in dance music—working on a forthcoming twelve-inch, playing in Chuck Berry's backing band in Paris, and so on.

Pat has always distanced himself from the "hard-bop and a suit" conservatism which is currently strangling creative music in this country. It's a stance that goes back to the early 80s experiences of forming the Oxford Improviser's Co-op with people like Pete McPhail.

"There were only three of us, but we put on a gig at the Holywell Music Rooms—a great room to play. The STRAIGHT jazz scene in Oxford was hilarious. The people who thought they could play tunes, could not play changes, and all the people they regarded as incompetent, COULD play them but didn't want to. My name's not Oscar or Herbie. As much as I love those guys, that's not me."

Steve Beresford

Oct. 19, '90

## Down To Normal And Back Again

She had not planned, exactly, to go up and speak to him after his performance, but as she tried to maneuver around the crowd in the packed gallery space, he was suddenly in front of her, talking to a reporter who had driven down from Chicago. So, after the reporter left, she shook his hand and said something like, "That was really great." Feeling that it was an inadequate thing to say, but not feeling able or ready to express the range or the strength of the emotions his performance made her feel, she didn't know where to begin to say, in a room filled with people, how much his thoughts about creativity, expression and silence seemed to mirror her own ideas about these things, and that didn't even touch on the other parts of his performance. So after he thanked her, she added that they had come down from Michigan for the opening. He said something like, "Really? Wow!" and thanked her again for coming, and patted her on the arm. She told him it was worth it, and thanked him for coming, and moved away, thinking that if they had been in a different situation she would have hugged him, but not feeling that she knew him well enough, not wanting him to think that she pitied him, or that she wanted to be seen hugging the Famous Artist From New York.

Charlie went up and talked to him too, and said the performance had him cry, and gave him a rock he had found at the first place they stopped

after they arrived in Illinois. The rock was spray-painted fluorescent pink. She had not cried, although she usually cried easily, and had been crying a lot lately. The only other time she had ever known Charlie to cry was when the two of them had gone to see a multimedia show on the AIDS quilt in New York. She had also cried at that show. She wondered if she was running out of tears.

They had driven first to Champaign, Illinois, to meet their friend Brad, who was letting them stay with him. As they walked to a Mexican restaurant, he asked, "How do you pronounce this guy's name, anyway?" "Poorly," said Charlie, and they laughed. Then he said, "I don't know, when I met him he was introduced to me as David." After they had driven from Champaign to Normal, they saw a newspaper article on a bulletin board at the gallery that said his name was pronounced wanna-ROW-vitch.

Because of the crowd in the gallery after the performance, it was almost impossible to look at the art, but eventually she managed to get a good view of all except the largest pieces. There was a great diversity in his works; there were paintings, photographs, collages, stencils and sculptures. Two of the sculptures were brains, reminding her of the model she used to stare at in the display case in the hall of her elementary school.

She liked the hanging sculpture of the globe which had toy animals, cars and people suspended beneath it on strings. The work that moved her the most was the one that had a text superimposed over photographs the artist had taken of his lover, Peter Hujar, after Hujar had died from AIDS. Instead of making her feel sad, like crying, she felt a void that seemed more awful than any tears, that reminded her of a many-times intensified version of how she felt when she read about endangered animals or the destruction of the rainforests. Another artist is gone, never to be replaced. Where were the commercials, the special news programs? SAVE OUR VANISHING ARTISTS?

A portion of the text read "...and I was diagnosed with ARC recently..." When he performed the text, he read "...and I was diagnosed with AIDS recently..."

When they got back to Lansing the day after the show, she took a walk and thought again about the idea of the creative process as a way of dealing with experiences, feelings and ideas by putting them outside yourself, as a way of sharing these things with others, the idea of this sharing helping people by making them feel less alone. Of the idea that a work of art can speak even though the artist is silent, even if the artist is dead.—Carol Schneck

# Helicopters UP Your Aufhebung

pts. 4-6

## TREMBLING

At the onslaught of un/differentiation, a blow (a cry, a shout, a scream, a thud, a death, a birth) begins to set something trembling, oscillating back and forth, more damn shuffling in place but this time cringing while we shuffle: like some dog shivering (contraction/relaxation, relaxation/contraction. You get the idea. You got the idea. You will get the idea.) after a back-fire.

Trembling. The visceral equivalent of tinnitus: we continue to dance even after the song is over—the essence of repetition—the over-riding and bringing-along of everything in its wake (Is there anything over and beyond that? We can't know. We are swept away.)

Some thing(s) we can leave behind (or come to); but what is a thing inside our head? What would it be to leave the thing that makes us ring, tremble, vibrate, repeat, forget-and-remember, remember-and-forget, run-in-place (Is that 'thing' language?) What would we be leaving (even if we could)? The world? Language? Both? (Are they the same?) What would we be going to? How long would it take us to get there? (2000 years? An average of 76 years for men, 78 for women? It would take less if you didn't live in the west. Those damn machines again.)

The thought (of that 'thing') makes me tremble (whether it is leaving or coming. I have trouble telling the difference sometimes.) The thought of a thing does *not* make me tremble. It soothes me, elongates me, stretches me to another place. Until I snap back. (I worry about it—a thing that is leaving me, or is it vice versa?) And isn't that another (larger?) kind of trembling? Maybe a spiral, maybe a circle jiggling all the time. Who knows how long that takes? (In an average of 76 years for men, 78 years for women that trembling stops. I guess. I don't have a large figure for you but we—some of us—want one, don't we? The rest of us are glad when the trembling stops—if it does; impossible to say who is the more fortunate. Would there be just two?)

## STUTTERING

Stammering, stuttering. Why does the non-congenital stutterer always fumble on the first syllable? Why not the last? The repetitive inability to begin (in the non-congenital) is perhaps the most telling form, of communication, more telling than the content. But telling of what? The opposite of what is being formally announced? Always? Or is it something more diffuse. (What sort of speech act is stuttering?) With the stutterer, there is never the inability to effect closure. To stop, to close, comes as a relief. But to begin, to start: to anticipate is to start to repeat...This aporetic stumbling composed of nothing but repetitive glottals: aren't we in the presence of the very edge of communication (and partly hanging over the void), when communication as purdurance turns into its exact opposite, pure identity? The aporetic difficulties of start-up tease out the merged strands of identity and difference.

This kak, kak, kak, duh, duh, duh., the tongue's thud on the roof of the mouth, how like an inability to lift-off, to become weight-less under great force and pressure, an indication of fracturing. To take the first step off the cliff, for the primate, might or might not be an act of courage, but for the bird...?

Stuttering becomes a sign for moving in place, a moving which goes nowhere and yet conveys beyond its shuffling non-movement an anticipatory discomfort which it can't name. It can only enact.

As It strays In Babel,

\*All have spin'd, scything the lured,\*

First Copter #2.



## HOVERING

Hover: (perhaps deriving from the old English 'hove', to abide, to linger.)  
to hang fluttering in the air, as a bird in suspended flight; to be in  
flight; to be in doubt, uncertainty, hesitation, or irresolution; to  
move to and fro near something threateningly or vigilantly.

from The Living Webster Dictionary  
of the English Language

Nobody wishes to hang suspended, unable to move mentally or physically. We are more comfortable with weight, a direction, even if (or even because) all weight tends to the center of the earth (and we are earth creatures). For us, for earth creatures, weight and direction can only happen on the Earth. But...we dream of the weightless, the freedom to lift and go anywhere. I suffer when I can't lift (think) away from those vectors leading downward. (Sometimes dissipation feels like lifting. I don't know if it is the same. Sometimes gathering seems like falling together and down. I don't know if that is the opposite of lifting. Perhaps some prefer gathering/falling?)

We try many things to gain lift. Our theologies/ontologies shed ballast/bodies in order to lighten the load. Our ontologies/theologies gather us all together and thrust out a sporulating representative, a king, a christ, a buddha, a chemist, in order that our seed, at least, may gain enough altitude to float away. Where, we are never quite certain even though we have given it many names. This 'where' just mainly seems weightless and capable of instant vectorization and/or dissolution of all previous settings. A where whose what seems absolute suspension (not lift; lift is the process of getting to the hover, as such it is tied to its weight and is tied to its weight if only in the dialectical attempt to reject its ballast. To hover is to be beyond the weight of the dialectic. It is something we never get to but we dream about it.)

This lift is a type of meandering wandering, as Heidegger characterizes thinking, is one that never seems to get anywhere, however, except perhaps as some form of 'more-ness', a quantitative condition that never seems to coalesce to a qualitative Hegelian lift (aufhebung) into the next stage. or rather the next stage is always more of the more, an oscillation from not-enough to too-much but under the guise of 'now-that-is-over--what-is-next?'. (A Mandst would say, perhaps, when everyone has too-much then the next stage (the lift) begins. The Hundredth Monkey syndrome.)

—Robert Cheatham



T r a c y T e r r i l l

## TWO SKIN CHAMBERS

### Iguana

It crawled into my mouth and slid down and swelled inside me... swelled to fit. My blood and my muscles shifted and pressed against my skin as it grew inside me. The dry and dusted smell of it coated my throat. The skin was arid and cool and pulled at the dampness inside me. Its claws slid down inside the tips of my fingers and toes. Gloved.

It was smaller once and I remember the stomach, small white belly resting inside the cup of my palm the breath moving in and out of it making a pulse against my skin. I put it down and felt the claws gripping the skin on my thigh. Skin. This drape. The rough tail whipped around scraping my legs. It was growing. Getting warmer. Turning bright green. It dropped against my stomach. The weight of it dented me. It pulled dry against me as its tail dipped between my legs. It drew blood. I could smell its dusted smell. I felt my heart struggling in its cage. It would be easy for you to open me up and see inside. My heart would come out and rest in your jaws, blood pumping out and sliding down your throat...feeding you...telling you. You could know me then. It bit my nipple and stared. Its eyes were anchored in its head like marbles set into clay. They were clear gold and blank. It blinked and when the lids unshuttered, I saw a white cross painted across each lens. My eyes feel like glass. They could shatter and fall out of my head and scatter across the floor and open me up. It pressed my neck on each side and brushed its snout against my lips.

When I look into glass, my face is the only face that I see, but sometimes now I feel my stomach scraping the floor and I wonder where I am.

### Leaks

I was closed once.

Outlined in red, she looked at the razor shining between her fingers. She was opened everywhere. Small cuts latticed her skin. The cuts netted her in. She was safe again inside the wet sheath growing sticky in the air and sealing her up.

She looked at the arm that rested flat against the table. She wondered if it was really attached to her. Red numbers throbbed at her through the window in the black box sitting next to the arm. Rubber plugs jammed her ears and black wire twisted from these around the arm and into the box. She brushed a needle against the skin. The vein was plump underneath. She poked the needle through. Metal dissolved inside her. Sound plugged her ears and swelled against the surfaces there. Fluid pushed up into the

tube dangling from her arm. The window inside the black box throbbed. "Red," she whispered.

The walls of her ears throbbed against the sound that plugged them. Invaded. She saw a streak of pink marking her wrist like paint. The pink spread across her hand making a glove. The skin burned and turned violet. She saw the first drops of blood oozing from the tips of her fingers. She was emptying...becoming a hive for something else to live inside. Her ears felt scraped out and bleeding. Ringing still.

This cut. Isn't it pretty?

1990

Dea Anne Martin



CaKE

An interview with Tracy Terrill in *LowLife* is something obviously years overdue. But good things sometimes take a long time to come around. For more than five years Tracy has recorded and performed some of the most movingly poetic "folk songs" or "pop songs" or whatever you want to call them songs I have heard anywhere. Her short stories in *LowLife* are shimmering fragments of a larger body of work yet to come. She writes like a sculptor, lovingly, obsessively pasting scraps of fabric, leaves and old yellowed photos onto plywood.

Tracy first came to my attention as a musical performer some-

time in 1986 when she was in a bizarre short-lived strumming/songwriting duo with Easturn Stars maniac minstrel Cabbage Galore Etc. Their disparate personalities and talents combined made for quite an amazing performance. At about the same time or shortly afterwards Tracy teamed up with the Medicine Suite big band that at one time featured not only founding troublemakers Meg Fox and Benjamin (né Opal Foxx) but later-to-be Royal Truxman Michael Earley and your humble co-editors E and G. Despite Tracy's contention that this group was not a good vehicle for her songs, the confusion and mayhem that resulted from such a cesspool of clashing "artistic" visions was almost always a good thing. In Medicine Suite Tracy played drums, occasionally bass, and only did a couple of her own songs. The tape I have heard of the group's Nexus Gallery show (that I missed) showcases a band in turmoil delivering some fine musical moments. Tracy's songs were a big part of that fiery set.

Shortly after this Tracy and Meg (the spiritual core of this late edition of Medicine Suite) formed the inimitable Cake. As a duo (near trio with Kathleen Lynch sprawled in front beating on a chair or something) they only played out once that I remember—at the 3rd Destroy All Music Festival at the Arts Exchange. This too was a remarkable breakthrough performance, the most stirring, subtle, sensuous 30 minutes out of five plus hours of chaos and noise that went down that one evening. Tracy has continued to play and record using the name Cake. Her 1989 LowLife release is entirely solo with Tracy performing her concert for nobody in a stairwell in a public building. Tracy has continued to play infrequent live gigs using the name Cake, most memorably, last year's Ice Cream & Cake show with Debbie Richardson at Klang, that one paid gig, I think. Recently she has declared that she will never play live again.

Over the years Tracy has played under a couple of different lineup names we failed to get to in the interview below. First there was the secret duo with Benjamin called Summer Complaint. Only one Summer Complaint song has survived. This track can be heard on the limited edition (now completely sold out) LowLife Free Cassette I gave away to subscribers a while back. Even more obscured by the winds of time was the trio called Dirt—not to be confused with the later day big guitar rock band called Dirt. The earlier Dirt was an entirely different cup of earth and featured Tracy along with a violin player named Becky Handley and our own Ellen McGrail on bass. Their only live gig was at the fourth Destroy All Music Festival where they were a big favorite with many in attendance. However, the three members seemed to not be too pleased about the whole thing and never practiced or played out again.

Tracy and I have been talking about doing the LowLife Tracy Terrill interview for a while now, but somehow we never got around to it till this go around. It was Tracy's idea to do it written, though we live within walking distance of each other. One day we even attempted to tape a conversation, and again Tracy decided to return to her typewriter. I was hesitant about this approach, but the results are actually more interesting than most spoken interviews I have attempted. An interesting footnote to this whole Cake story is the recent appearance (in Atlanta) of a false Cake, an all female '70's tribute band that supposedly does Sundays at Trappers. (\* includes a male drummer and an equally male

slaezeabagesque manager.) Tracy is laying pretty low musically in recent months, but it will not be long before she strikes out with something new, a cassette on Bangaway that should break your heart and leave you humming for days to come. —G.T.

Glen: How did seeing the Easturn Stars for the first time influence your thinking at the time?

Tracy: Hearing those sounds, seeing those freaky people, that way of music making outside my head, outside of my own bedroom was a relief, especially Carson (Kabbage)'s songs. They were a lot like my own secret songs. Hearing them confirmed my thinking. For a moment that desperate adolescent longing to witness, discover something "important," was quenched. I was shy, I don't remember if I talked to any of them that night, maybe Kathleen because I heard she was moving to New York, and that's where I was living then.

Glen: And now?

Tracy: That was a long time ago, six years, a lot of things I thought then I don't think anymore. I'm more tolerant, though I still thirst for that level of purity they seemed to have. I like Sinead O'Connor, but I like Debbie Richardson more.

Glen: When did you begin to play music? What drove you to that crossroad?

Tracy: I started writing songs when I was 13, writing songs before I could even really play my guitar. Songs about boys that I loved and girls that I loved. I got lost in a movie about a girl singer and bought a little guitar. I skipped school a lot, I wasn't very well read, but I liked the dictionary. I stole my mom's Chevy Nova on the nights they went to choir practice and drove to the Mall for guitar lessons. Naively when I was 16 I went to a little recording studio with my guitar and played the owner a couple of my songs. He said he didn't think they'd sell. I've been writing songs for 14 years. A lot of those songs are lost.

Glen: Approximately how many songs have you written in the past 3 to 5 years?

Tracy: About 75. Last year I found a red Melody Maker on the side of the road. The neck was broken but my plumber friend nailed it all back together. I've gone electric. I love it. It is the one I play the most on my new tape.

Glen: When and how did you hook up with Kabbage Etc...? Describe your musical association... Have you heard from her lately?

Tracy: I don't remember. Our musical association was strange, desperate and brief. I have not heard from or of her in a long time.

Glen: Have you played music with Kathleen Lynch? Is she an influence? What is she?

Tracy: Never successfully. I was very structured in my approach and she very vaporous. We spent a lot of time together talking and roaming around N.Y. I don't consider her a direct musical influence but more like a lifestyle influence, like seeing the

Eastum Stars, a lot of our conversations confirmed my own secret thoughts. I had been in art school where it seemed to me that art was this clean precious thing very separate from life, sure all the kids got kind of dirty when they were drawing but then were encouraged to frame the stuff, use the right materials for the sake of being archival, pursue arranged timeslots on white walls to display these moments of chaos. Early on I made pictures on paper with ink like everyone else. Something happened one night, I had a frenzy, conjured up a big motor accident in my head, wrapped objects in plaster bandage—a doll, a sand dollar, and a hair brush. Late that night I got on a bus to visit someone I missed a lot in North Carolina, the next day the three of us got into a bad car accident. After that I made pictures and objects with toothpaste and hair and food, and it was all very beautiful but not very precious to me so I threw or gave it all away. Sometimes the fury of the moment of creation made me sick so I couldn't stand to look at it any more. Once I set something on fire in still life class



Tracy photo by George Magiros

with David Booker, who made a primitive birdhouse for a Whopper from Burger King and hung it in a tree and sewed a blue fur slipcover for a tree stump, for me two moments of peace in an otherwise violently mundane world. I moved to N.Y. and met Kathleen. Music, objects, philosophy, costume were lived by her, daily, ritualistically integrated into her life rather than separate from it. I remember her room in Spanish Harlem. Every inch was covered in some kind of personal hieroglyphics using everything from raw macaroni to animal parts, wig hair to snaphots, poster paint, impermanent and perishable. Like a cyclone had erected a shrine from the rubble of a vacant lot. I remember it being at once inspiring and deeply disturbing. Magic, beauty, god, out of trash. Her hair, body and dress were the same as her room. She would paint herself or glue frayed rope to the ends of her short hair. I recently saw some paintings in a book by Marc Chagall. Figures floating, some up close, some far away, farm animals, peasants, dreamy religious symbols, their relationships to one another making not much linear sense but the paintings felt finished, important and they were beautiful. I thought it was like one of my songs. I saw in Kathleen the importance of claiming our own symbols, icons out of the chaos, fitting them together, making our own of it, finding peace.

Glen: Honestly, how do you feel about your experiences playing in Medicine Suite? Describe those days.

Tracy: I have come to think of everything I have done in the past as a stepping stone to what I do now. Medicine Suite was much wilder and louder than I am naturally, so any dissatisfaction I might have felt was because it was definitely not the right vehicle for my songs. There was a lot of decadent fun about it all. We had no equipment, no transportation, none of us could play our instruments at first, like a cyclone had erected a rock band from the rubble of a vacant lot, Meg and I lived in the practice space, there was no plumbing, so we went to lots of parties and took baths there. What else do I remember? Playing Athens was fun. We met a guy who was a milkman and had a freezer full of icecream. The Trinity show was fun. Me and Meg made a bunch of fancy cakes for the stage. She sat on one. I destroyed the others with my drumsticks. It was beautiful and disgusting. There was cake everywhere. Purple cake, green cake, red cake, blue cake. Then there was that last show at the art gallery. That art guy Alan Sondheim booked us to play in the main gallery room in the middle of all the art, then someone there heard we slung mud or urinated or started fires or something and they got terrified we were going to hurt the art and they wanted us to play in the basement but we fought for the right to play upstairs and won. Benjamin rolled a couple of bowling balls across the gallery floor, but besides a little organic mess like some dead flowers and spilt drinks we were well behaved. A teenager told us he thought we sounded like Pink Floyd.

Glen: Then there was Cake. How did you come up with that name? Are you planning to keep it?

Tracy: A dream I had. Meg Fox was force feeding me cake. It was a beautiful cake, I was in bed, it got all over the place. The next day I bought a red velvet cake and ate half of it and threw the other half out the window. Someone was mowing the grass. I had a fantasy of colored cake flying out with the cut grass like



fireworks. I loved someone very much once. I nailed cupcakes to the sawed off corners of his bedposts. When I get tired of being human, the complexities and dirt of being human I want to be inanimate. Sometimes a cake, sometimes a clean white shirt. Cake instills desire in me. Desire inspires me. Meg and I were playing together at the time. Cake seemed like a good name. We met some guys across the street who played together and were called the Pie. It was divine. Now Cake is me and whoever. I'll keep it until a project comes along, a person comes along, that seems more permanent, a chemistry comes along that warrants a change.

to be large and guttural. I've changed. It's smaller and higher now, but I still like rooms with echo's, bathrooms, stairways... It's important to me that my music be simple and live, minimal mixing and technical decision making.

Glen: Rumor says your next Cake tape will be a bunch of duets between you and other folks. Is this true? Who are some of your partners? What made you decide to take the 2 piece path?

Tracy: Some will be duos, some songs won't. Me and Bill have

Glen: What is your notion of good art?

Tracy: Broken green glass, a half circle of coathanger wire, cellophane tape. A perfect emerald tiara, you don't even need to see it.

Glen: What inspires you or doesn't inspire you?

Tracy: Sometimes nothing inspires me and I get very sad. Sometimes the smell of a cardboard box will instill in me such a moment of desire I have to run and hide. These moments of desire inspire me.

Glen: How did you work with Bill Taft and Robert Hayes when you recorded your tracks for the LL L.P.? Did you tell them what to do? Did you practice?

Tracy: Bill and I practiced some, we work good together. Rob came in later and improvised. I asked Bill to play banjo and Rob to bring his bow, but those were the only directions I gave. I'd watched and heard both of them enough to know what they played would be right.

Glen: Why did you decide to record in the stairway with Rob and Bill? You have a thing about stairs, no? (like Hitchcock)

Tracy: We recorded in the stairway because of the acoustics. The sounds fill up the air around you, simple and untechnical. I recorded my first tape in another stairway. I learned to sing, found a voice in that stairway. I wanted my voice

done some stuff, me and Christopher from DQE.

Glen: What scares you the most?

Tracy: Bright, hot, sunny days.

Glen: Who is your favorite poet?

Tracy: Jean Genet has been though now I do not have much use for the ideals of the thief and the orphan which he writes about. No one else has struck as powerfully yet. There is a Russian writer I've read only one book by, Sasha Sokolov. It is very dreamy, dense prose, that I like a lot.

Glen: What is the most beautiful thing in your world?

Tracy: I don't know.

Glen: After the LowLife benefit you said you would never play live again. Did you mean it? Why?

Tracy: Yes. I do not get as much back as I put into it. It drains me, attracts weirdos and only once did I get paid.

Glen: Do you prefer to play alone?

Tracy: No not necessarily. It is easier for me. I am shy, but if I play with the right person, I like it better.

Glen: Would you rather write a song about a thing, a person or an idea?

Tracy: I think each of my songs is about all of those things. Inspired by people, disguised as objects, moments inspired by objects, disguised as people, and always an idea behind it all, the unexpected places we find hope, distinguishing need from neediness, I went to a swimming pool last summer for the first time in years and felt very strange and ugly so I wrote a song the next day about the ideal pool in my head where the water was white and the rocks were smooth and white and there were soft white seals, and I was beautiful there in the cool pale plush pool. I guess that song was about defining ones own sense of beauty.

Glen: Do you think you have a novel in you? Have you written much lately?

Tracy: I have a lot of paragraphs in me. I used to have a lot of sentences in me. Maybe a novel in me someday. I've mainly written songs lately. I'm working on a story. It's harder than it used to be. I've recently gotten sober and I think there's a connection there somewhere though I've not figured it out, but my music has gotten stronger and that's OK with me.

Glen: What's next?

Tracy: My second tape, *Dirt to Daisies*, will be released on the Bangaway Productions label as soon as it is finished, hopefully a couple of months. Bangaway is run by members of DQE, Chris, Zak, and Grace. DQE is my favorite band, everyone should order their tapes.



Tracy



Tracy and Kathleen Lynch



*"Hyacinthus amethystinus....it is badly named, as there is no shade of amethyst in its blue, which resembles the color the sky might be expected to be, in the far north, very early on a perfect summer morning." Violet, vermilion, collyrium. Thunder. "I want this one," I said. And the smoke from the ghats went up in the low blue clouds and the clouds and the smoke turned the color of bruises. The Hyacinth Man was the cat-dick man. It never stopped pouring, the towers of the temples descending to the river were covered by clouds, there was never more than a half-light. Why did they want it in your penis? Sacrifice of 108 animals in the festival. There was the idea that they irradiated people with the shadows of their ships but if you actually went into their town it was dark there all the time. Lustral bathing of the lingams. Snow, crystals, smoke, fire. The Church gave us a book to read: "Neighbor genetics of gender mutate cyclically." The first one I saw was walking out of the crowd with this big red dick splitting his breeches. Five men in white fanning a fire on a ghat. Shit, saliva, urine, sperm. Open pistols for breasts and assholes. Mutators liberate memory. It had barbs all over it like a cat dick. Embracing gods locked in each other's eyes and arms and legs. Twenty maskers were following him and another fifty goondas followed them. We were in the Church, we weren't workers, we weren't allowed to touch. "Overlapping patterns of sexual cycles" Deep in the little streets there was rain twilight all day long. Heads ringed with whispering pistols. Eternal supplication of heaven. Lingams given mirrors for self-contemplation. All the wires were up on poles, layers of hundreds of wires, and there were always strings of yellow and blue lights tangled through them because there was always some festival day, there were hundreds of local gods they were supposed to celebrate, two or three a day. Within this body is the world and its origins and its passing away. His eyes. You start taking mutators or you get caught under a ship or whatever, you don't know what could happen, you could have an accident, you see those Accidentals making the rounds of the ghats all day and night jerking and twitching and changing colors? You shoot it in your dick because it makes them excited. Nauseating dust-filled air. They have some kind of stone like radium that glows and the works they give you, the glass part is all covered in these glowing carvings of people made of these different parts of animals all twisting around their sex parts, every kind of sex part. All the colors in the streets, the stall banners and everyone's robes and the washes on their plaster were all fluorescent oranges and yellows, saffrons, memories of glare posited against the wet. "analogous to terrestrial mammalian estrous cycles" Naked ascetics*

smearred with shit, iron weights swinging from their dicks. Where he led me the blue poles marked each side of the door and each one went straight up into the cloud cover and lit it up and lit up the hanging mist. Lingams dressed in golden cloth. The maskers were pushing the cat-dick man through the street, there was a street light buzzing on a pole with a thousand insects in a cloud around it and when they pushed him past me it threw his shadow on me and inside his shadow I saw his face. "but involving the shifting of primary and secondary sexual characteristics" You know what's wrong with them, what happened? Downstream from the scattering of the ashes ablutions for the expiation of sins. We were in the Church and the Church began with Our Holy Cathy and Her Impregnation by Her Blood of Our Mother Paula Who Spoke For Our Holy Cathy and somehow we don't understand from Our Mother Paula's Child all the rest of us were born. I hated the jelly, it was so cold, they were all watching like they'd never seen someone with only a dick, only one sex in himself, the jelly was so cold you burned, it seemed like it burned away your nerves and for a minute you didn't feel anything and that's when you shot up, they all yelled at you to shoot. Temples descending in twenty layers to the river. His eyes. "through spectra of gender and intergender phases." They can't stop coming, whatever they were taking they finally just came and came over and over without ever stopping. We wanted our God to efface all theirs. Baring his teeth. "Like, oh, God. A twenty-four-hour climax that can go on for days." Hills of garbage, scavenging children. They shoved him past me and into this street shrine, they swarmed around in front of him and just tore the bars off it. Thunderbolt, the Absolute, carved in the shape of a dagger. The next one I saw was in the back of a sleep stall in a street below the East Well, there was a little boy there with something in a sack, going from table to table. The jelly froze me but then the second before I hit I felt how there was something after that numbness, some waking after that, and that that was all I wanted and so why was I stabbing that needle in with all of them hissing and whistling at me and starting to go at each other? Three million deities. It was the Burning Town for the workers and the fevers where we were making them build our place were carrying them all away and in every street there were pallbearers, little knots of mourners behind them mostly sick themselves, their eyes, the shrunken bodies up on their poles wrapped up in our gold foil they stole from us, everyone else soaked through in red and blue rain, shuffling ankle-deep in the runoff. Oxidations, shadows. I saw the frozen lake. The worshippers within reached extended their hands to the flames and then pulled them back to touch their heads with their fingertips. Men blistered with gesturing vulvas, women with pointing penis noses. We owned the workers, we plastered Our Holy Cathy's pictures on all their walls and all the pictures peeled away in the rain. He looked at me and I could feel his claws. Their shrieking

whistling. I fell down and they pulled me up again, their eyes on me were hundreds of hands pulling on me. "There's no way to tell anyone who hasn't tasted it." Their language all sibilants, they hushed when you passed, their voices indistinguishable from the rain or the sound the Masters' ships made, hidden overhead. "These patterns of gender, heat, and reproduction are highly complex but humans immersed in Neighbor society can learn to read them well." *Babies swelled in a ring around my abdomen, they ripened in seconds and consumed me and exploded my skin to escape.* Mortals practice rear entry. He looked at me and that drew blood from me. Inside the bag was a blue box like a box a watch would come in. "I'm greedy." Unendurable pleasure infinitely prolonged. *I fell down and they pulled me up again.* He bared his teeth at me. *Mahasukha. "Mahasukha."* Human shit littered the streets, they thought shitting towards the sun killed the demon. The same god is compassion and the lord of death. He hissed the word and then they shoved him past into the shrine. "I'd like to keep most of it for myself." Metempsychosis is the transmigration of memory. In the box there was something wrapped in sticky paper. *Thunder. Huge drumming. Indescribable misery. In the box I saw another box set in velvet.* "Neighbors following disciplines of extreme concentration and deviant Neighbor cultures abusing mutators can control, to varying degrees, their own gender phases" Our tracks in the snow behind us. Women inched their way down the riverfront on their stomachs. Accidentals die, they fall in the river or the goondas kill them while they're robbing them or most often they just starve. *Extravagant genitalia blooming from the drugs.* They wash all the corpses in the river and drape their heads in flowers. *Cheeks, armpits, hands.* Lightning, fireflies, the sun, the moon. They wrap them in yellow shrouds and stuff wicks in their mouths to touch them off. 1008 animals beheaded, the executioners ankle-deep. They were shoving him into the hole in the shrine, all screaming. The thing inside it was soaking its wrapper in grease. *Earth's moon rolled behind a tiny window.* Colored rains, blues towards black, incandamine washes dyeing us. *Opening the box lit it.* His scream. "Independently of their physiological cycles." The boy pulled my hand to it. *Magic dysentery! Everything left me through all my holes.* Infinite Blue Space. *Blue glowing Hyacinth splitting his breeches.* "Just on the cusp of each day." Cremation fires stoked high. *Bare trees in blue dusk three hundred years ago.* There was a pulse in it. *Hyacinth dick of thousands of whispering vulvas.* "So that I'd radiate sunshine." They stop needing to eat.

1990  
Richard Gess

## JESUS AT THE BIKERACKS



drawing by Billy Taylor

## DEBBEY RICHARDSON

Writing about friends is always a strange game, though also always central to the evolution of LowLife and Atlanta's secret underground music. The two afternoons I spent with Debby Richardson attempting to conduct some semblance of an interview were not so different from many others we'd spent talking, smoking and trying (never succeeding) to make sense of a senseless world. The difference was this tape recorder, this battery operated reproduction device, staring up at us, wanting to devour our every thought, anxious to magnetize for history our grand concepts. So staring back at this thing, hardly able put words to air, the unlikely interviewer and interviewee made little progress. It is not so different from what happens most of the time when I sit down in front of a blank screen, all the supposedly infinite possibilities before me, provided by interface between caffeinated human brain and Microsoft Word program. Eyes blur over. The mind becomes a dense impenetrable thing. So I get up and wash the dishes. Soap and water and dried-on overnight food are concrete things a dull fellow can come to terms with.

A white guy came into the place I work the other day. I was wearing one of my three Malcolm X t-shirts. He asks me have I actually read any Malcolm X, or do I just think he's cool like everybody else who wears shirts with his picture on them? It strikes me that this guy probably hasn't done a survey of people who wear Malcolm X shirts, and I should tell him to eat shit, but I am at work and have to restrain myself. I'm not even supposed to wear shirts with words on them at work, and the one I have on says: "By Any Means Necessary." So I say that I have read Malcolm and heard him too, and that yes I do think he's cool. Then the white guys says, well, he hasn't read Malcolm, but he's heard he was better after he got back from the Middle East. Yeah,





Magic Bone photo by G. Thrasher

maybe, it must have been the weather. So the white guy says what he really hates are those shirts that say "it's a black thing you wouldn't understand..." "like don't even give me a chance." But I can see why someone would not give this white guy a chance, he really wouldn't understand. It's like that with Debby Richardson. She is such an incredible talent, but you wouldn't understand.

The history of Debby that I know about begins sometime in 1988 after she met Benjamin and became an instant legendary secret rock star with Freedom Puff. Over the next year and a half Freedom Puff played a remarkable number of shows considering their position as "Atlanta's worst band." Of course, they were probably Atlanta's best band, but the difference is not that much. After, during (even before) Puff, Debby worked on a number of different projects on tape (Deer Transfixed By Headlights and Hip Deep In Dead Blondes) and live (Ice Cream Headache and Sweet Little Candles), but none of these things stabilized into something that would last. Somewhere along the way Debby went on tour with Lisa Suckdog and Costes and received lots of unwanted fame and agony. When she came back she recorded the two sweet little Freedom Puff tunes on the LowLife Longplayer. Since then Kläng has turned out to be a fairly regular venue for Debby. Both Ice Cream Headache and Sweet Little Candles (a performance/tape noise combo with Fred "Peach of Immortality" Ward) were able to play there on more than one occasion. Recently, Debby has turned to Magic Bone, her hard rock band with Damon Moore (guitar), David Moore (drums) and Tim Seaton (bass). As always Debby's magic shines through whatever it is she is doing, but this new band sounds to me to be what Debby should be doing with her time in 1991. David's heavy as fuck drumming, Tim's melodic bass, and Damon's lyrical, noisy guitar are a perfect match for Debby's new songs. I think she hates "Don't Hit Me I'm Salt" but it is

about as close as you get to a perfect rock song. And "In A Trance Like State" is a great noisy, monumental pop song. And all their songs are good, really. It doesn't matter if I convince anybody about any of these issues, because a lot of people are going to notice this band with or without any help from a goddamned rant zine. Magic Bone played recently in this ugly downtown basement warehouse. The hot, dank, smoky room with its low ceilings and dirty, carpeted floor was somehow a perfect setting for this band. Dave, seriously or not, said it was the most beautiful crowd they'd ever had. Of the hundred or so at the party only about twenty people were anywhere near the band or paying much attention, but it didn't matter. Dave was right, it was beautiful.

For more about Debby there is an interview with her by Chea Prince in the second issue of the Public Domain newsletter, *Noise*. (from 522 Harold Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA, 30307.) There is another interview coming out in the next issue of Ben Davis' *Abscess* zine. (from 104 Willowdell, Toccoa, GA, 30577). There was extensive coverage of Debby's tour with Suckdog in a number of different magazines. The best of these was *Bananafish*. The following interview is obviously an edited version of the lengthy two part conversation I taped with Debby. Ellen was there for the first go around. Second time through it was just the two of us. We started with a favorite topic.—G.T.

Glen: So how's Tom Smith?

Debby: He wants to destroy you.

Ellen: What's he got against us? Is it both of us or just Glen?

D: It's the scene that has rejected his contributions. When he talks about destroying people he gets such a sexual thrill to his voice. Actually I know a lot of people who get sexual feelings from talking about destroying people.

G: Let's talk about you Debby. What are you trying to do now?

D: You've hit me at a bad time. I don't want to do anything I've ever done before. I want other people's influences, where as before I knew exactly what I wanted to do and wanted to just utilize other people to get my thing across. Now I don't even know what my thing is. I want to do pop music. I want to do rock. I want to do everything. Once I do that... I'll... just destroy the world so to speak and you first Glen.

G: With Freedom Puff, which is your first band that I know about and probably your first band that you want to talk about, a lot of people considered it a Benjamin band and you let that happen, you let Benjamin represent the band. This despite the fact that the songs were yours and you told Benjamin what to play. Why did you do that?

D: I have a hard time believing anything is mine. Like when I live somewhere, even if I pay more rent than other people that live there, I say I live at their house. Therefore, I played in Benjamin's band. It's that way with other things too.

E: So it was just a matter of possession, and not that Benjamin was already a star.

D: No that wasn't it. It came down to more personal politics completely apart from Benjamin's star status.

G: Brian Sherman wrote that there wasn't enough Benjamin in Freedom Puff.

D: I have a real sore spot with that little piece of writing because it was the most about me that's ever been written in LowLife and it was WRONG! My least favorite thing was that he said I wrote songs to serve the classic psychological purpose of distancing myself from the pain, which anyone that ever wrote songs will tell you is not true, except at the very moment that you write it. Because you get up there and you have to sing it again, while if you didn't write a song about it you'd probably forget the subtleties of it. After you've written a song about it you're doomed to it forever. I like that because it makes all the moments of your life happen at the same time.

G: In Freedom Puff you did a lot of the same songs for a long time which is something you haven't been doing as much since then.

D: We never practiced until right before the show, and Benjamin wouldn't learn any new songs.

G: Why did you decide to do a band with Benjamin?

D: I came to Atlanta in a punkrock band called Chester with Ian (Mykel). I didn't know much about anything. I didn't even know much about punk rock. I knew about the music that I did. I was the drummer and I was a really good drummer, blah, blah, blah, who cares! I received all these outside influences, mainly LowLife. So I got out of the punk rock band and I got out of society and I retreated into a LowLife haze and a *Destroy All Music* haze and a *Notes From Underground* haze. Then I decided that I would come out of my shell for one night and go to the Destroy All Music Festival. (note: #3 at the Arts Exchange with *Psychodrama*, *Monroe's Naked Again*, Kathleen Lynch, the debut of Cake, etc. where Debby is actually pictured onstage with Kathleen in *LowLife 13*) I knew all those people from reading LowLife and hearing the radio, and I saw Benjamin on stage. Christopher (Verene) gave me a picture of Benjamin that night and he looked so possessed by something. He was really just fucked up. It's a bad thing that I thought that was so appealing, but I did. Then I started playing in a band with Davey Bones and Anna Conda because they told me they used to play in a band with Benjamin and Meg, and I thought that they were cool. Then

when I met Benjamin again, I went up to him and told him "I am in a band with Davey and Anna. I want to do something else. Do you know anyone that wants to do anything." And he said, "Yeah, I'm doing something. You can do something with me." I just wanted to play music like I read about in LowLife. I just wanted to be a footnote in there somewhere. Benjamin always said "You know we'll never be able to play anywhere but at the Mudshack," but I didn't care I just wanted to do it.

G: How did you deal with being in a band with Benjamin for such a long time that did the same songs over and over?

D: Even while Freedom Puff was going on I began making things up on my own. That's how I dealt with the fact that I couldn't make up new songs with Freedom Puff. That stuff eventually became the first *Deer Transfixed* by Headlights tape on LowLife cassettes, which is one of my favorite things I ever did. I like it. I made it either by myself or with Ian playing drums. I like that stuff that's my favorite way to work. After Freedom Puff broke up, well, we didn't really break up, my world was shattered and Benjamin became a star in the Opal Foxx Quartet and I thought that I would never ever have another show. And I lived in a warehouse on Edgewood where all the crack dealers were. I stayed in there all the time and I never saw the daylight. I made all these tapes that I never thought anyone would ever hear. I just made them because I had to. Then Marc (Moore) came along.

And he and I started making music down there in the dark basement. He would come every day. Which ever one of us woke up first would call the other one and say, "we've got to practice." He'd come over, and we'd make horrible godawful Hip Deep In Dead Blondes music. And we never thought we'd have a show, and we never really did. Except when he played with Freedom Puff once. It was really draining because it was so intense. No don't put that in there. I hate that word. And please don't use the word "honest" in my interview. If I ever have to read anything about "honest" or "raw" or "emotions" or "feelings." Don't ever put anything in there like that because I hate stuff like that.

"Amiable" is a good word. "Pain" is the number one, don't say anything about "pain." Or what is it what'sisname Brian Sherman said "various emotional distresses and disturbances..." I felt so dumb when I read that. I never wanted to perform again. I don't think music should be therapy. I don't believe in the catharsis theory. A lot of people think that is what I do, and probably that has something to do with it. If I wanted therapy I would go to AA or NA or Co-Dependents Anonymous or Women Who Love Too Much or something.

G: So then you did this Suckdog thing?

D: The whole thing is your fault. You showed me this accused video of Lisa with Psychodrama which attracted me to Lisa.

E: Just like marijuana leading on to heroin.

D: So I saw Lisa and I wrote a song about her, and you sent it to her, and she wrote me a letter. We developed a very satisfying letter relationship. I was very close to her. I felt very inspired by her, and she felt inspired by me, and all that and it was very good. Then she suggested I go on the tour and I did.

E: So you started writing letters to her before you met her at the Destroy All Music festival? (note: the fourth DAM fest at Nexus Theatre with Suckdog, Freedom Puff, Logos, etc., documented in LowLife 16)

D: Yes we were very close. In a way I was closer to her than anybody. I still think about it.

E: But you don't correspond with her any more?

D: No. They are on tour again now with Bill Callahan.

G: How does Costes afford to go back and forth between France and the States?

D: He's rich. He inherited a lot of money.

E: So he doesn't have to work and just goes on tour and makes CDs?

D: Yes. He just spends money on his career, on music stuff, but he lives very frugally. I thought I could make their show be something that I could enjoy being a part of. I wrote the play. I worked very hard on it and wrote all these really good words. It was kind of based on the Kitty play that I did (note: a puppetshow with Tracy Terrill, Patti Lowe, and Ellen in the first *Working Papers* series) at the Small Press Bookshop. I played myself, my one trick part as a kitty that gets run over by a car. Then Jean-Louis wrote a lot of words, and we melded his plot with my plot. We practiced it a lot and it seemed really good, but once we got on stage... I don't have a problem with nudity, but I didn't know it was going to happen and I didn't want to take my clothes off because I knew all those horrible, godawful, scum-sucking people out there didn't really want to see a fat girl jumping around. There was a lot that I wrote that just wasn't in the play. It was hard for me to be heard because like there was a part of the show where Jean-Louis was supposed to be fucking me, and I didn't realize that he was going to try to fuck me and tear my clothes off. It was really hard to concentrate on saying my words into a microphone, and use one hand to keep my clothes on. He really did rip and tear my clothes and hurt me. I got a black eye in New York. And I got

brushes and burns and cuts. I still have a lot of scars from the tour which is kind of nice. I don't regret going because I learned a lot. I couldn't handle it for a while, but now I know. It was a crash course in ugliness.

E: Were there any parts of the show that were good?

D: I sang a love song to the car that ran me over that was always pretty. A lot of people liked it even though Jean Louis bothered me while I was trying to do it. That was part of the show for him to bother me. It was really upsetting. I flipped out a lot on stage. I don't like performance art, maybe... I don't know. I don't have any bad feelings toward Lisa. I just don't want to ever do anything like that again. After that I said I would never come back to Atlanta. So I tried to stay in a series of small obscure towns. I only came back for two weeks to record the two tracks for the (*LowLife*) record. But I couldn't leave. I wanted to do pop music after the tour because sweetness and niceness was a retreat from the world I saw onstage performing with Lisa Suckdog, the ugliness in the people's eyes and their hate and their lust and the lowest of everything, in every city in the whole country. Its like that everywhere. It's always like that. I wanted to just play pop music and be really sweet. I'd just do the sweetest, softest, nicest, softest, sweetest, etc., etc., thing in the whole world. Of course with me all the badness starts to creep back and it's back with a vengeance.

G: What else do we have to talk about?

D: Are you going to change what I say, like Chea did? (*Chea Prince in his interview with Debby in Noise*) Chea went back



F r e e d o m P u f f p h o t o b y E . M c G r a i l

and changed all his questions so they had slashes in them. He didn't say all that stuff. How do you say a slash? He went back and added big words that need slashes. He didn't say all those big words to me. He did it to my answers too. You've never heard me talk like that! You aren't going to turn me into a post-modern analytical critique, are you?

G: I'm not capable of doing that. So we've talked about your past. D: I'm into burning all that and forging ahead. Doug DeLoach asked me: "Why must you destroy everything that comes before?" That's what you do. You destroy everything you've done before, and then you make something else and you destroy that too.

G: That sounds like a post-modern analytical critique to me. How are you destroying everything that came before?

D: Any way shape or form that I can. I don't know, just by making something else. The only thing that makes you want to do something new is turning on what you've done before. You can understand it backwards, but you have to move forward. Look at all the stuff I've done that I'll never want to do again. Well, maybe that's not true.

G: Hey, you're hurting my plant!

D: It's weak and feeble. Only the strong survive. I'm Tom Smith, and your plant is you.

G: See, now you're bringing up Tom again! Let's have an analytical critique of Magic Bone.

D: I'm not a very good P.R. person for my own projects. I'm starting to destroy things as I'm doing them. I'm good at that. My thing that gets me through Magic Bone, the saving grace, is I have

this new alter-ego slash, got to get those slashes in there... alter-ego slash imaginary friend named Dobie. Dobie can do everything that I cannot do. Dobie is a 17 year old boy with long hair who plays a lot of guitar, smokes a lot of pot, drinks, fights with his mom, puts up heavy metal posters, does all this shit, is really obnoxious, and he's not afraid to get up there on the stage, he's not scared at all. He doesn't take any shit from anybody, and he doesn't care if anybody likes him or not. If my band only knew how often he gets up there instead of me. I don't even bother to wear dresses anymore. When I played at the WRECK Room I wore this blue lace dress, and I felt like a fucking girl. I was up there upset about stuff. Then I decided to just wear boy clothes and be this other person, and fuck it and kick around and yell at the soundmen when they fuck you up and don't sit there and take it. Dobie gets everything he wants.

G: Do soundmen give you a hard time?

D: They turn me down somewhat under audience chatter because it hurts their sensitive artists ears. Their artist's eye for beauty and their sensitivity, I guess I make them sick. If I chew off my hand during this interview do you think that you can say what it looks like in a good, post-modern way, and make it seem like it means some kind of Robert Cheatham deconstruction thing?

G: Probably, Robert did burn himself up. *(During a video recorded by Tim Seaton, Robert Cheatham caught himself on fire and received second and third degree burns on about a third of his body.)*

D: I could never pull that one off. How many times did I beg the audience to burn me up in Freedom Puff and Robert went and did



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it himself. I'm doing a video for Tim about spinning things and autism. The most I could do is get sick and dizzy and throw-up from all the spinning. That's not as good as burning yourself. They say that autistic children look at spinning objects and make them parts of themselves. They are spinning them to get into this trance to block out the outside world because everything that's outside sucks and its gone and its bad. I'm working on it. It's going to kill my employment future. Do you want to spin and get sick? Could you write "blaaahchchch" for barf, "and we barfed." The best thing about my rock band is that my drummer wears lace tights and leather shorts and a "I Wanna Be Your Dog" T-shirt, but the problem with my drummer is that he's started saying the word grunge an awful lot and it's starting to make me uncomfortable. The new Magic Bone song is a pop song. It's called "Olympic Blonde Brownie." It's great. We have some pop songs. They rock them up a little, but its great. Dave likes the pop songs, even though he's a lace tight wearing rocker. He says, "write some more pop songs like that; those are catchy." Also the girls like them. The girls like "Just Like You" and "Olympic Blonde Brownie." The girls like the ones I write. I'm going to start saying: "This ones for all the little ladies out there. I'm sure you know how I feel, being a girl and hurting and all that."

G: Your singing style has gotten heavier, more metal.

D: I know. I adapted to my band. I became more metal than metal. But yes, I sound like Axl Rose.

G: Did somebody tell you that?

D: Yes, Caroline. It went straight to my head. Dobie loves that shit. He always wants to sound like Axl Rose. So I'm the most metal thing about my band, but I couldn't sing the way I was singing before, with Magic Bone. Well, I could have, but I didn't want to. You know what I said about destroying and shit.

G: Maybe people will stop comparing you to Jean Smith.

D: I've gone from Jean Smith to Axl Rose. In the interim I've grown a dick and gotten blonder and made a lot more money. I've noticed that every spring and summer I get into sweet things, like I want everything to be like sweet and flowers and nice and honeysuckle and ice cream and then when it gets cold again I get all evil and twisted up inside. I think it's the weather.

G: Maybe you should stay inside and the weather wouldn't affect you so much.

D: Only if you have climate control like yall yuppies here.

G: I've got this all on tape. You're the second rock star who's come in here and called us Yuppies. The first was Bubba from Psycodrama.

D: We have a lot in common, me and Bubba. "She's the only girl that understands about being fat and shit." Me and Bubba and Jim Hoffmann had fat peoples' bonding. I liked Bubba.

VISUAL  
POETRY  
K.M.



IN THE DESERT

I stood at the lip of the world. A voice said, "Jump."

I don't remember the color of my skin. It digs into the crevices. It colors me in layers. The layer closest to me crawls. I can't remember when I didn't feel legs crawling on me...biting...things digging hot tunnels through me. When there are others and I can see their faces, I can see that they are smelling me but I don't remember how I smell. I can roll on the wet grass here and look up and see the buildings around me and the sun sitting on top of one of them like a marble. The water on the grass soaks through the fabric and skin that drape me. I still itch at night. I am grateful for that.

...the normal bladder will continue to fill without causing us discomfort and at its usual filling limit will elicit nervous stimuli which we, however can override, to expand the capacity and empty the bladder at our convenience.

It was standing against the brick wall. Its feet were buried as though they were hidden or erased. It was staring at me. Something limp dropped out of the open slit in its trousers. It lifted the thing up, face crunched, and pointed it at me. The yellow arc fell across the air and on me. Its eyes slitted like razor cuts filling with black blood spreading up to its temples. Its nostrils yawned.

"You can't even do that," it said. "Gotta squat. Give me some money."

I am damaged. I am in bondage. I came to this empty place long ago.



The building was burning. The heat tightened my skin,

shrinking it like paper. The flames that devoured the building reached out and licked me. A voice said, "This is a mouth that wants you. Walk into it."

The weather folds around me like another skin. I don't remember moving from one place to another. Lashed, chilled, burned...wrapped in an envelope of pain, my skin speaks to you. Muscles scream against the bone. Pain is liquid and pools on the concrete making a bed for me. I move through the hot air and I see colors floating unanchored...like something wet squeezed between plates of glass, pink and bottle green splashed against the concrete like violence but staying quiet as I move through the air of this place. The colors seep into me, seize me and anchor in. The bud and the blossom. They are growing in me. Becoming me. Is this a gift from you? A solvent for my will? My legs have moved for so long. Rain has lashed and scarred me. The sun has marked my eyes. Have I emptied myself to make a hive? Red tints the green of the leaves in the park and drips down. Cities are gray steel, they say, muddled and dim, and the color of blood is really red. I know all of that. My city is red and bleeds.

...saliva is a complex fluid; when obtained from the mouth it contains not only a large number but also a wide variety of microorganisms. The population of the mouth varies from day to day.

The stump folded in at the wrist. The skin stretched across the bone, rosy like the flesh of cooked birds can be at the joints...blood remembering the hand that used to be there. The shorn limb waved in the face of others. It saw me. It stopped and tucked the stump behind its back. It grinned.

"What is it?" I asked. It spit on me and giggled as I looked at the bubbled liquid slipping over my knuckles and down to the street. I looked up. I couldn't see it but it had left a space in the air. A red space.

Your face. I could twist off an arm or a leg and find it hollow inside. Your face...your breath on me. Can I punctuate myself...let you out...let you in? Riddled. I am waiting for you. I am leaking like bread soaked in water. Sadden. Swallowed by your beauty. I am blinded like a leaf with the sun. I fell beside him as he sprawled against the white wall. The arm was blackened and it oozed onto the floor. The muscle was tired and couldn't fight. It had ridden the bone for so long. I stared at the mortified limb. It trailed limp and putrid across the floor.

"Make it go," he whispered. I held my knife up, but he shuddered and there was no need. His eyes emptied out. My brother. Translated. I can't follow. The bloodied nail drops used and useless from my hand.

Emptiness yawned inside me. Metal felt stitched to my skin. I sprawled across the rain soaked street, my legs loose and hollow and uncomprehending. I rolled and felt the street clinging to my back like sweating skin...a wet palm holding me. The dark sky opened like a pit above me. My eyes shuttered down. The smell of rubber brushed my scalp. A voice said, "Sleep here."

...but I can't sleep. The edges of objects fuzz and wiggle and scuttle giggling out of the range of my eyes. My eye sacks quiver in the sockets, shaking, the skin jerking around the edges, the insides hot and swelling like lumped jelly. Things pop up in front of me and disappear like cloth pulled down through holes in the sidewalk. I hear your voice hurtled around the edges of the buildings, the firmness of the edges gone trembling and wet, melting inside the shroud of heat that my eyes travel in.

...sweat glands which provide a powerful physiologic mechanism for heat loss. The 2 to 3 million exocrine sweat glands distributed over the entire body surface are capable of delivering 2 to 3 kg. of watery sweat per hour.

It was wearing a suit. I could see the film on the top of its skin soaking through the fibers. Its eyes flickered like insects trapped behind glass.

"I'm your angel," it said. "Give yourself up." It held out a sheet of paper gone limp in the heat. The wetness in the air washed the words off of it as I held it up. The paper felt like eels in my hand and dropped. Its teeth oozed out of the oily sheen of its face and hung set in a white grin.

"Brother," it said and vised my hand. A wound opened up around its neck like a zipper. It laughed, air bubbling from its opened throat, and backed into the crowd that had appeared around me like foam. The skin on my hand burned and I wanted to wash it.

I felt molecules backing away from a weight moving down. Air shoved the skin on my face. A thud moved up to my ears from the concrete. Something was pink down there. "They're throwing meat again," I thought. I looked at it. Two small birds were naked and dead and rolling in the breeze. Eyes bulged beneath closed lids. They were raw but dry. A sick pit opened up inside me swallowing the hole that I carry there. I felt the birds go inside me, gaining mass and surging up.

There was glass shattered and scattered on the concrete, each cradle and blade resting like a petal. A voice said, "Pick that up and make a sign on your skin. Pull the edge across the blue in your wrist and watch it change. The red bites and is beautiful..."

The world sinks into my stomach. My stomach is open now and clean as a dried sponge. Light pours through my skin and fills me like breath, but there is nothing in me to absorb the light. It comes out of my eyes and moves across things and enters them and makes them throb and sigh. I am scraped out. Folded out to you.

...chemically, blood is almost identical with sea water.

The white walls surrounded me. I sat on a bench waiting for help. It moved up the hall toward me. Its head was shaved and livid. Blue veins poked up beneath the skull's skin sheath. It made a clicking sound on the floor as it moved but its feet were hidden inside the metal shield of the trolley that circled it. Its arms floated like they were hooked to strings. The skin clinging to the curve of its elbow was bruised before. Yellow skin gripped the needle that opened to a bag swinging from a metal rack beside its head. Thick red poured out of the bag through a tube and into the sucking arm. It stopped in front of me. The eyes were hollow but waiting. The white part was yellowed like the skin on its arm. Its gaze slid across me like ice on a heated spoon. I looked away from it feeling empty. I felt something stab my arm and I looked down to see the needle dangling inside my throbbing skin. A smear of red, like chalk, burned against the surface.

"There. That's yours," it said and fell. It stared up at the ceiling not blinking. Its eyes were dried and chilled. Its chest didn't move up and down.

I was standing then sliding. The brick wall left a trail on my back like a kiss up and down. The sun was as hot as a tongue spreading wet across me. I looked down and saw the wet, empty space on me. The color was spreading there. The other parts were close, resting on a pile of newspapers, coloring the paper deep red...flopping there limp as a doll. I see all this when I close my eyes. Blood stiffened in the sand like letters. A circle of darkness slapped over my eyes. Happy me. My knowing started there.

There was a bird. The round red eyes shuddered inside the feathered skull. The feathers shook against skin spread on hands like a pair of gloves. The bird trembled and was still as the hands spread feathers apart and felt the spine of each stiff between the fingers. Sometimes fur grows inside skin. I remember lattices of metal, crawling on metal stretched against the sides of wet brick walls, crawling in the dim light. I remember scraping my feet against the metal and a scaled tail wrapped around a leaking pipe. Water burned into fur and skin. I squealed and then howled. I was something bigger. My legs broken and my belly scraping the concrete, begging to be saved into vapor and away from this. I see a face in front of me. The eyes are tinted red like blood in a glass vessel and

a blue bobbin floats like ice at the center of each. That coat is like mine...like mine was. I spoke German. I wore a suit. But I felt a tap on my forehead and once on my chest and I was wrapped up to you. The tears on your cheeks run through the same grime that I know. My own dirt. Your tears cut through the hot air like a blade and make a pool for my skin. I woke up and saw the sky. I wake up every minute and see the sky. A man next to me says, "The Devil is ALIVE!" and that may be true but it's your face I see. A plane glides across the sky and nine bodies are pulled out. Nine there, spinning like pinwheels. Death on a stick...spinning there...three times three. The blue is an area we share. Yanked into this. Vast and alone. Nine beauties. A crown. Flesh and fabric lit and spinning as they come down. Down. Down to this. Their happy home. We are gelded creatures. We have made ourselves alike. The wash of red. First it beats like chains against metal then it slows to the calmness of breath until it is as quiet as if it were gone. We want this. We do. Have you felt the wetness in the early air sinking into the joint of your knee? It feels like rust and rot as well. When you live in the air of this place...there was no choice about walking. I had to come back to the city. When you live in the air of this place...too ripe and wet...particled...noisy...damp with the sweat of others. To be dry is a blessing, dried out like something buried in the east where the wars are, where the sky curves over under the sand. Away from this abandoned place. To sleep is a gift when the sun is down, but my eyes are learning to be dry. I approach you broken. With nothing. My skin is a sheath. I would like to skin myself and move into the blue that rests above me like a saucer...like a veil blanketing...like a door. Blood from my broken heart would come out from my mouth. I would paint the threshold red after I went through. After I had cut my path. This place. My skin is a bubble. My skin is a cave.

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Dea Anne Martin

I GOT ENOUGH FOR  
TWO HOT PEPPERS &  
AND AN HAIR CUT!



## Anthony Braxton Interview (Quartet) 1990

What can I say about Anthony Braxton? A whole lot actually, but that would only hold you up from reading what Braxton himself has to say. One of the major figures in contemporary improvised and composed music, someone who has been perplexing and pleasing the hordes for three decades, Braxton is not to be ignored. He was in town. We were there. The interview went down. Present: Wyman Brantley (W), Ellen McGrath (E), and me (G). Thanks also to Wyman for transcribing and typing this interview.—G.T.

B: Who is this for?

G: It's for this magazine right here. I brought you a copy.

B: Lowlife. Hmmm. Okay... Now, why would you call a magazine Lowlife?

G: I named it that a long time ago.

B: Lowlife in what sense?

G: I guess it had something to do with Life magazine, which I felt like this was the opposite of.

B: Well, the fact that you were motivated to put together a magazine in the first place is beautiful. That's something we need in this country, people who are functioning. Anyway, question.

W: What do you think is the difference between the impetus to compose versus that to improvise? You seem to have very different approaches to these.

B: Okay, your question is complex, in fact you're asking me about the aesthetic of my music and the science of my music. I would say this: one, my music is a response to the last two thousand years, and in particular a response to the great trans-African, trans-European, trans-Asian dynamic lineages; the contribution of our great women and men. I am not interested in jazz or classical or any of that. I am merely fascinated with world sound and want to be involved with that. As far as your question is concerned, well, I have found for myself that the difference between mutable logic states and stable logic states is what attracts me. By the term mutable logic I mean the possibility of dealing with the moment creatively, through improvisation or mutable structural elements that give possibilities for keeping the music fresh. My work in this area is influenced by the restructuring movements of the 1900's, whether we're talking about New Orleans, which Louis Armstrong personified, or the movement which responded to the work of...well, Mr. Wagner: Schoenberg. I can't believe how affected I am in this time period by Wagner...what a life. I am not interested in total improvisation, except maybe 1/3 of the time, nor am I interested in total notation, except for 33 and 1/3% of the time, nor synthesis logics, except for 33 and 1/3% of the time. At this point in my system I refer to it as a tri-partial music state that seeks to demonstrate 1) a reality of architecture, in the sense of structures or compositions, 2) expectations in the sense of contents of associations that attempts to establish what I call a rephilosophical position that respects the individual's right to make up his/her own mind. In this respect my Tri-Axium writings 1-3 are now available, and are the foundation philosophically of my work. And finally 3) ritual and ceremonial musics, or I would like to express sonic action in the visual state, through storytelling. The Trillium opera system, which I am planning on working on for the rest of my time on the planet...

G: Aren't you working on an opera now?

B: I'm at present working on Trillium R, the third opera in this

set. And when completed Trillium will consist of thirty-six autonomous acts that come together to produce twelve three act operas. I've had one performance of Trillium A five years ago, so in the future I hope to have more possibilities to deal with the world of ritual and drama. Storytelling musics, music for children, parade music... this is what I'm interested in. And so, to answer your question about notation versus improvisation, in my system I respect all of those things. I feel that...well, we have 9 and 1/2 years in our country to respond to changes on a planet level, changes taking place in China, Eastern Europe, all over the planet there are realignments taking place, although Americans are having complexities due to American social reality. And yet, I feel that we have a very dynamic country, a country that is very unique, although most Americans have no idea of how special it is. We have every persuasion here. Everyone thinks they hate the other group, but in fact all of the various people are learning from each other, being affected by each other, and we have great potential if we can somehow work our way through the complexities which have stalled our nation, especially in the last thirty years since the sixties time period. I would also include the post-Reagan era dynamics, especially what it has meant to value systems and economic complexities. We have a deficit that is serious, but at this point it is merely a concept unless we can put in new leaders who have a vision of forward motion that transcends materialism.

G: Why do you say 9 and 1/2 years?

B: Because then we will enter into the ritual state of the next millennium, and vibrationally it will be significant. For instance, with a reunified Europe and the changes in balance, America will find herself in a new position, not in the driver's seat. If you look at Japan and the Pacific rim countries, the planet is functioning, everybody is functioning. Only in America do we have confusion, although I do not mean to imply that events in Africa are ready for profound interaction. I recognize the complexities people in South America are dealing with. And yet, there is the feeling of change in the air. I believe we are in a serious corridor. America is in a position to go forward, or we might find ourselves mired in complexities involving race, sex, divisions which must be transcended. I'm not interested in the Democratic party, the Republican party, left, right...I'm interested in coalitions based on the beauty of universality, and concern for the individual. We need new ways of looking at things, a fresh perspective that respects our people. We need to build coalitions based on similarities rather than differences. I believe the next 9 and 1/2 years will give a vibrational snapshot of the kind of balances we will start the next millennium with. Question.

G: You were quoted in Option magazine as saying that the desire to be the best in anything, even in music, was a "macho sickness." I thought that was a very interesting way to put it. What is your....

B: I disagree with that. If I said that it was probably not....

G: What is your motivation?

B: I'd like to be the best. I'd like to be the best person I can be, but I'd like the right to define what that means. And I don't mean best in the sense that someone else would be worse, but the planet experience is a finite experience. There is every zone open to every person, and part of the beauty of this experience has been to clarify my attractions and find out what I'm really interested in,



and I would like to have an involvement with my work that expresses what I have found out that music is. And so in that sense I want to be the best. In that article I may have been describing...let's see, what has happened in this country? I wouldn't exactly call it macho...

G: You were responding to a question about criticism and the attempt to describe what is good and bad.

B: I disagree with the present value systems used in describing what music is about. It's much more complex than that. We will have to erect an information platform in the next cycle that respects our women, that respects the input of our great women, that respects the input of Europe. Oh my God its become so fashionable to look down on anything produced in the West, but that viewpoint doesn't make any sense. We need an information platform, a vibrational platform, which respects all of these lineages, and from that point there might not be any need for the value systems we're dealing with, where this better than this is better than this. We're coming to a point where on looks at what happened in Florida with 2 Live Crew and the banning of the music, and it's like, okay, we've reached the open state, and now people have the option to decide if it is the optimum state, which I don't feel it is, or what is the proper balance regarding the rights of the individual versus the dynamics of the group, the collective. I would like to hope that the next time cycle have our people and our leaders take a look at this question.

G: You mentioned rap music. What do you think of rap? I like Public Enemy a lot...

B: I respect the discipline of music, and as far as rap music is concerned I would only say at some point I view it as creativity. Young people who are functioning will demonstrate that in every time period no matter what the government does, no matter what the state of things, people will find a way to express themselves. I would also say that I view it as...hmm, okay, I would like to get to the point where everyone can say "motherfucker," "kill the systems," "blow up the structure" or whatever, and once that's finished we can get on with the process of saying something that might be more beautiful and from the deepest part of ourselves. We look to influence our children and to set the vibrational path we desire in the next cycle.

In the sixties there used to be a saying: "everything is everything." In the next millenium, my hope is that it will be expressed as "everything is everything...is everything." With the third partial of the tri-partial we might find that though everything is everything, there are natural polarities which, in themselves, are not disrespectful of anything. And those polarities are whether we are commenting on people who might not want to integrate, or homosexuals, people who want to be with their own group, whether we're talking of the Young Republicans or whatever, that we can begin to look at our nation and respect these divisions (although they are not really divisions: all of the polarities and vibrational divisions have been manifested from the very beginning.) My hope would be for a new state of tolerance, and also for an understanding of limitations, and from that point there might be the possibility of a more profound unification and reunderstanding of profound love. Next question.

G: From what you say it seems like you like a lot of different music, but when you play it is like jazz, like more than anybody else I hear Albert Ayler. Am I overrating this or...

B: I am of course related to that music and that vibrational direction. I have disagreed with the word "jazz" because of how it

is used. If I call my music "jazz" then I have to put up with criticisms based on my understanding of rhythm and what fascinates me about rhythm. If I have to allow myself to be viewed as a jazz musician, then if I write an opera suddenly I'm viewed as alien. I find that if I separate myself from the title "jazz" that suddenly I can be involved with music. That's all I'm interested in. And for me the joke of jazz creates more problems than not. I mean, now I can play "Scrapple from the Apple" like I want, and play Bach and Beethoven, and be a human being. I want the same rights that white Americans and Europeans have for themselves. That is, to be involved in music and have that based on who I am as a person, as opposed to having to suffer the whims of the jazz business, which a given decade will announce that "jazz is dead" or the question "is it jazz?" I mean, now when they talk about jazz they're talking about David Sanborn. They're talking about so many different things they've shrouded what the concept really means. What I mean by jazz, or Trans-African Progressionalism, is a movement which has manifested devices that fulfill a tri-partial alignment, that being a continuum which has always insisted that the individual is important, the group is important, and that the vibrational presence of the group through improvisation and pre-determined structures will determine what the essence of that group is. That has always been a primary axiom in the Trans-African continuum, and in the Trans-European continuum, although most white Americans seem not to remember that Bach was an improviser, or people like Hildegard von Bingen who were involved in constructing the European aesthetic. I believe in the next millenium we need a complete reexamination of so-called history. What is called "history" is simply an interpretation.

G: It's always changing.

B: It changes like everything else. Everything goes forward. Everything goes forward but the jazz business complex has created a viewpoint that doesn't go forward. It's a viewpoint that seeks to contain the dynamic implications of the music in a way that retards the meta-reality development of the music. This is what I object to.

G: Yeah, there is a lot of silly criticism like "this isn't jazz-it's not..."

B: For me it's just incredible, I mean, "this is jazz, this is good, this is bad." In fact, when critics talk about this area of the music, they're talking about musicians who have never made any money, who've struggled twenty, thirty years: this is like a glorified hobby. At the same time you have people all over the country who learn four maybe ten notes and go out and make incredible amounts of money. I have been attacked on every level and at the same time there is no documentation where Braxton has said "Just go out and have sex, go out and kill people," or whatever. My music is viewed as negative in light of the commercial forces taking place in this time period, the profound dynamics of the American marketplace which has undermined everything. And I have to deal with some guy telling me I don't swing? You kidding me?

W: In the collage pieces, what is it that holds the separate parts together?

B: It depends on which piece you're talking about. In No. 82, the piece for four orchestras, it's all notated, in the notated sound-space, having to do with sonic direction. I believe that in the next time period, if we don't destroy ourselves, as we move into other galaxies we will begin to understand what Einstein talked about

with the significance of the atom, nuclear energy, and what post-nuclear architecture really is. And post-nuclear architecture-I believe my work will be viewed in that context. Architecture systems which evocative from many points as opposed to one point. My model at this point, which consists of roughly 370 structures, is an attempt to create "fresh" structures, as opposed to "new" (I don't agree with the word new). Fresh in the sense that any material can be integrated with all other materials. I have been involved with both an internal and external evolution of my music. Externally, the possibility of connecting structures in twelve different ways, coming from nine different paths of correspondence. My system has evolved to a point where I can speak of it as a giant train set, or a territory. Performances in the future will involve each individual having a menu dictating which collective assignments must be executed, which individual assignments, and open criteria, so that each individual can decide his/her direction. An architecture of this type will be conducive to the possibilities I have opened up in the post-AACM continuum, possibilities for dynamic interaction, as opposed to piano-bass-drums, you-take-a-solo-I'll-play-the-head structures. In my system the mutable form will express, I believe, the political and scientific attitude of the next time cycle.

W: I know you studied philosophy in school. Are there Western philosophers you have an affinity for?

B: Well, let's just say I feel very close to Plato, but Aristotle I have a great deal of respect for. Their dealings with the information complexes for demonstrating mystery systems. I find as I get older I have more and more respect for the Rationalists. In the next time cycle I intend to go back and reread The Republic.

G: A lot of your records come out on big labels. Do you see any conflict in the creative musician dealing with corporate record labels?

B: Well, I have been very fortunate to deal with Arista, but most of my labels are very small. Part of the problem we are dealing with in this time period is that there is no access to the primary modes of communication and information. I'm 45 and I've never been on television here. I've been on television many times in Warsaw. I feel very at home in Yugoslavia and Holland where I've had many opportunities to be on television, radio...or in London. People like myself, the great American master Douglas Ewart,... I've never been approached by "Great Performances."

E: Do you find that other countries have more respect for you than your own?

B: Of course they do. If there is any respect at all it's from others. We're still coping with the baggage of slavery, still recuperating from slavery, and of course African-Americans are still dealing with the profound dynamics of slavery, but white Americans must realize that they're dealing with the same thing. I think it would be good for the country to have more possibilities for this music to be exposed. Wagner's Ring cycle was on recently, and I had friends come up to me and say "Wow, I didn't realize that music could be like this." Because only a small bit is exposed on television. At least with more exposition it opens the possibilities for each person's desired direction. With more information, you have the chance for a better mistake.

G: Did you have a chance to hear Mandela speak?

B: Not live, on television. Mr. Mandela...what can we say about this great man who has shown us that after 27 years of being locked away you do not have to give up, you do not have to give up your dreams, you do not have to accept some 2nd class

alignment to existence. Mr. Mandela is another example of that, and his struggle has given all of us more hope for ourselves. That's why it's important to have role models.

E: Do you like to play alone or with other people?

B: I like to change. I like the possibility of having the solo challenge every now and then, or to play a standard. As a matter of fact I just got a copy of Sousa's opera "El Capitan."

E: I didn't know he had an opera.

B: Mr. Sousa is one of the great American masters who was sacrificed. He's been an inspiration to me. To answer your question, as a creative person I'm interested in growing, and part of growing for me is trying to stay open to new things and changing. Change is important.

G: What do you think of the concept of progress?

B: I have nothing but hope and optimism for our species. The fact that the creator was able to create an entire planet and galaxy for our species to experience physicality is beyond any thought I could ever have. I see no reason not to be optimistic. The older I get the more grateful I am to have this chance to live. It's such a brief experience. For those of us who have our health and the ability to dream, we are very fortunate. You could not even be miserable if you did not have a body.

E: So you're more optimistic as you get older?

B: Yes. In fact, to not be optimistic I feel would be egotistical. Who am I not to believe in the force which made this possible? I'm not only optimistic, I'm grateful to be alive. Even when I'm miserable.

G: What do you consider to be your greatest musical failure?

B: Greatest musical failure...The failure to want to deal with that question. That question slants everything towards the negative. Rather say what are my failures as a musician, I would only say that as a professional student of music I look forward to continuing to learn and grow. And whatever the individual decisions have been in my life, whether it constituted something successful or a mistake, in the final analysis everything is positive. Without a mistake, a chance to visit the lower partials, you could never know what that is. Not to mention, by making mistakes, and learning from them, you get better and stronger. As such, there's no reason to dwell on the negative aspect of a given action, because inherent in that action is also something positive. I'm ready for new mistakes, not old ones.

### **Selected Discography (based on current availability through Cadence Distribution, Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY.13679)**

Solo:

*For Alto*; Delmark DS 420/1

*19 Solo Compositions*; New Albion NA 023

*Composition 113*; Sound Aspects 003

Duo:

*Kol Nidre*(Andrew Voigt); Sound Aspects 031

*Duets 1987*(Gino Robair) Rastacan BRD 002

*6 Duets* 1982(Johh Lindberg); Cecma 1005

Trio:  
**7 Compositions** 1989; HatArt 6025

**Trio & Duet**; Sackville 3007

**This Time**; Affinity 25

Quartet:  
**5 Compositions** (Quartet) 1986; Black Saint 0106

**Performance** (Quartet) 1979; HatArt 6044

**Seven Standards** 1985, vol. 1-2; Magenta 0203, 0205

Large Ensemble:  
**Composition 96**; Leo 169

**Ensemble 1988**; Victo 7

Improvisations:  
W/ Derek Bailey-**Momente Precieux** (Victo 2);  
**Royal vol.1** (Incus 43);  
**Company 2** (Incus 23);  
**Company 5** (Incus 28)

W/ Richard Teitlebaum-**Open Aspects '82** (HatArt 1995)

W/ Max Roach- **One in Two, Two in One** (HatArt 6030)

## CONTACTS

**Ajax Records** Tim Adams used to publish a fanzine called *The Pope*, which I believe was often compared to Gerard Cosloy's *Conflict* zine. Time passed, and fortunately for all of us, Adams put his energies into record distribution. This started out as a 7" only label and distributor, but these days he's got cassettes, LPs, even some CDs. Singles are still the bulk of what Ajax deals in, and those who like to spend a lot of money on these little things should be buying them from Ajax. They've got all kinds of fun stuff you would otherwise have to order from a dozen different addresses, unless you were fortunate enough to live within close proximity of an extraordinarily cool record store. Some labels Ajax carries includes Drag City, K, Public Bath, Teen Beat, Vertical, and Corwood. Obviously, this stuff leans toward weirdness rock, but it is the kind of rock you can pick up and throw through the nearest window and walk away feeling pretty good about the experience. Ajax is also a record label, notable for their several AntiSeen records. This is a professionally run operation, which means orders are turned around quickly. But it's small enough that they still care or at least pretend to care. They've got good prices too. True to Adams' background in fanzine land, the catalogue has cryptic, "witty" writing and descriptions of records, best-of lists, contests, "art," and other such fun stuff, but the bulk of the thing is gobs and gobs of records you are invited to pay money for. Get the latest Ajax catalogue and you can stay attuned to the collector bullshit without ever leaving your putrid home, which is what you wanted to do anyway. Catalogue available from POB 1460614, Chicago, IL, 60614, USA)

**Amok Fourth Dispatch** calls itself the "sourcebook of the extremes of information in print," which is a not so subtle way of saying they have it all. They have hundreds and hundreds of titles that should be of interest to readers of *LowLife*. The 350+ page catalogue is divided up into broad intriguing categories like "Control," "Orgone," "Scratch 'N' Sniff," and "R&D." Each title is briefly described or excerpted and the hundreds of illustrations and photos make the catalogue an amazing experience in and of itself. A few titles that catch my eye: *The Cold Black Preach* by Robert H. deCoy asserts "the black preacher is still whitey's flunky a 'head nigger' hired to keep peace between the white exploiters and their black victims." *My 2000 Year Psychic Memory as Mary of Bethany—13th Disciple to Jesus of Nazareth* by Ruth Norman is the Unarius Foundation account of Jesus. *Surviving Major Chemical Accidents and Chemical/Biological Warfare* tells how to do just that. *Adolf Hüler: The Unknown Artist*, "published by Adolf's #1 fan in Texas, millionaire Billy Price," "this beautiful volume contains the most complete collection of Adolf Hitler's paintings, drawings, and designs available." "A bunch of more familiar titles are found in the "Pulps" section including books by Rimbaud, Kafka, Borges, Nabokov, Celine, Phillip K. Dick, Phillip Jose Farmer, Hubert Selby Jr., Michael Moorcock, Jim Thompson, etc., etc. If there's only room for one book catalogue in your life, this might be the one. The catalogue is \$8.95 and worth the price from 861867, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, CA., 900860-1867, USA.

**BTT tapes** This is the magnetic tape home of our Sheffield friends John Jasnoch and Linda Lee Welch. Linda and John are the two halves of the improvisational group called Skits. They are also part of a thriving musical community in Sheffield, and that's what BTT is all about. Their cassettes document challenging improvisational music by a variety of duos, trios and larger groups that all feature either Jasnoch or Welch. Also they have the Bone Orchestra cassette "When Will The Blues Leave?," which is a large band featuring many Sheffield improvisors playing actual songs that are supposed "to sweep away the Blues." (from 45, Hadfield St., Sheffield, S6 3RR, England)

**Clifton Associates Inc.** Those searching for cheap magic tricks, gags, and pranks, need look no further than this catalogue. All that stupid shit your mom would never let you order out of the back of *Cracked*, is here for the taking. They've got great stuff like "Snap Shot: a totally tasteless gag made of flexible clear silicon which looks exactly like a long string of snot," or "Comedy Fried Egg: totally realistic...slap on forehead and say 'boy do I have egg on my face!'," or "Flash Paper," with which, you can, "get instant attention and service in slow-to-serve restaurants" and "convince people you are the Devil!" There are racier items like "The Great Condom Cap: one size fits all, made of natural latex, just like the real thing" or "Grow-A-Pecker: tiny penis grows to enormous size when dropped in water." If your nature leans more toward intellectual pursuits you might prefer some of the books these people offer, including: *Principia Discordia*, *High Weirdness By Mail*, *How To Write A Hit Song & Sell It*, *Madmen of History*, and more. These people even carry grab bag type selections of hardcore porno (print and video) at low prices. Send for catalogue from Esoterica Castle, 349 E. Cooke Rd., Columbus, Ohio, 43214, USA.

**Front De L'Est** (catalogue No 9) This is a huge music catalogue of industrial, experimental, ritual, and dance music, along much the same lines as *Artware*. The selection is equally amazing with stuff from labels like Dossier, Skeleton, DOM, United Dairies, Esplendor Geometrico, RRR, Recommended, Silent and many many others. A lot of this stuff is available from other more convenient sources, but most *LowLife* readers can probably find something they haven't seen elsewhere in this catalogue. Write to 13, Rue Verrier Lebel, 8000 Amiens, France.

**K records and tapes** Tom Smith of Peach of Immortality once told me

that the K catalogue "looked lame..." he rambled on, "but at least they're getting something out." He will probably deny this quote just like the one about Ornette Coleman in LowLife # something, but he really did say it. And you could say I am pretty lame for dragging good ol' Tom into this paragraph, and you would be right. K is a label and distributor, though they are perhaps best known for being a label. The newsletter/catalogue that Tom Smith sneezed at, is also a pretty neat chunk of ersatz teen culture. It is poster sized on beautiful milkpiss colored newsprint. In addition to zillions of records and tapes you can spend your money on, there are LARGE photos of K bands and best-of lists and such shit. If I was asked to name my favorite record label, I would not hesitate to name K, and I'm not sure what is my attraction to this teen revolution stuff is, as I enroach upon middle age. I guess, no matter how old or young you happen to be, there is no escaping the fact that the best K bands — Beat Happening, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Cannanes, the Go Team and Mecca Normal — are also some of the best rock/pop bands known to human-kind. The selection of other labels' stuff is also fairly encompassing with faves like Pavement, Royal Trux, Unrest, and Daniel Johnston. Catalogue available from POB 7154, Olympia, Wash., 98507, USA.

**Master/Slave Relationship Mail Order** Those curious to check out the work of Debbie Jaffe (aka Master/Slave Relationship) should get her mailorder catalogue from which you can order any of her dozen cassettes or one CD. Perhaps most interestingly she has two videos: *Forced Abandon* and *The Wild World of MSR*. Both are "videographed" by Rick Darnell and star Debbie doing solo performances and music written specifically for the videos. The individual titles of *Forced Abandon* are enough to peak my interest: "Piss," "Tit," "Gagged," etc. Of course, I haven't actually seen any of these videos, but I would certainly be into seeing them if I didn't have to pay \$25 apiece for the pleasure. Those of you who have the \$25 to spare are encouraged to give them a try. An "age statement" is required. Catalogue available from Debbie Jaffe at POB 191211, San Francisco, CA., 94119, USA.

**The President's Box Bookshop** Presidential assassins and other people that enjoy reading about the killing of American leaders should check out this source of fun reading. They have hundreds of titles relating to the deaths of Lincoln and JFK, as well as Robert Kennedy, MLK, McKinley and others. Conspiracy theorist will also find many titles of interest here. Send for the catalogue from POB 1255, Washington, D.C. 20013, USA.

**ROIR** Reachout International Records, the label that never put out vinyl to begin with and still doesn't, is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Over the course of ten years ROIR has released one hundred cassette albums of all types of music including punk, R&B, industrial, ska, reggae, and a lot more. Nevertheless, bossman Neil Cooper definitely has a preference for reggae beats and true to form the one-hundredth ROIR cassette is by Dub poet Oku Onwura. If you are reading this and don't know about ROIR, you should send for their catalogue today from 611 Broadway, Suite 411, New York, NY, 10012, USA.

**Silent** This is an excellent label/distributor of experimental music and horrible noises. Along with RRRRecords they are the major source of this stuff within the US. Silent recording artists include PGR, Arcane Device, Thestralians, the Halfer Trio, and the Haters, but the catalogue also includes non-Silent items you might not find elsewhere like Borbetomagus, Mobius & Roedelius (yawn) and Amor Fati. They even have some rock stuff you might not expect to find here like Zeni Geva, MX-80, and Godflesh. Write for their handsome free catalogue from 540 Alabama St., Suite 315, San Francisco, CA., 94110, USA.

**Victo** is a label out of Victoriaville home of the amazing yearly improvisation/jazz festival. The label features the same kind of stuff including Braxton, Bailey, Marilyn Crispell, Roscoe Mitchell, Slawterhaus, etc. Write for a catalogue from Les Disques Victo, C.P. 460, Victoriaville, Québec, Canada, G6P 6T3.

**We Never Sleep** has an odd selection of some recordings (Illusion of Safety, the Haters) and a bunch of books (Burroughs, Ballard, Gibson, Dick, Bataille). What makes the selection so odd is the inclusion (in the middle of all this postmodern/sci-fi/noise for noise sake/art stuff) of several titles by this guy George Hayduke. You know who he is! He's the one who wrote all those revenge books like *Getting Even: the Complete Book of Dirty Tricks; Revenge: Don't Get Mad Get Even; Make My Day, Make 'Em Pay*; etc. Write for a catalogue from Paul Dickerson, POB 92, Denver, Colorado, 80201, USA.

#### Other Addresses

Conflict  
POB 264  
New York, NY, 10009

Little Free Press  
Rt 1 Box 102  
Cushing, MN, 56443

Nancy's Magazine/The Dave  
POB 02108  
Columbus, OH, 43202

The Shaking Ray Levis  
908 Avon Place  
Chattanooga, TN, 37405

Carl Howard  
209-25 18 Avenue  
Bayside, NY, 11360

ND  
POB 4144  
Austin, Texas 78765

Artpolice  
3131 1st Ave. So.  
Minn., MN, 55408

Motorbooty  
POB 7944  
Ann Arbor, MI, 48107

Bannafish  
POB 11463  
S.F., CA, 94101-7463

Lisa Carver  
POB 1490  
Dover, NH, 03820

Xexoxial Endarchy  
1341 Williamson  
Madison, WI, 53703

Amok Press  
POB 875112  
LA., CA, 90087

Loompanics  
POB 1197  
Port Townsend, WA, 98368

Electronic Cottage  
POB 3637  
Apollo Beach  
Florida 33570

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POB 2026  
Madison Square Station  
New York, NY, 10159

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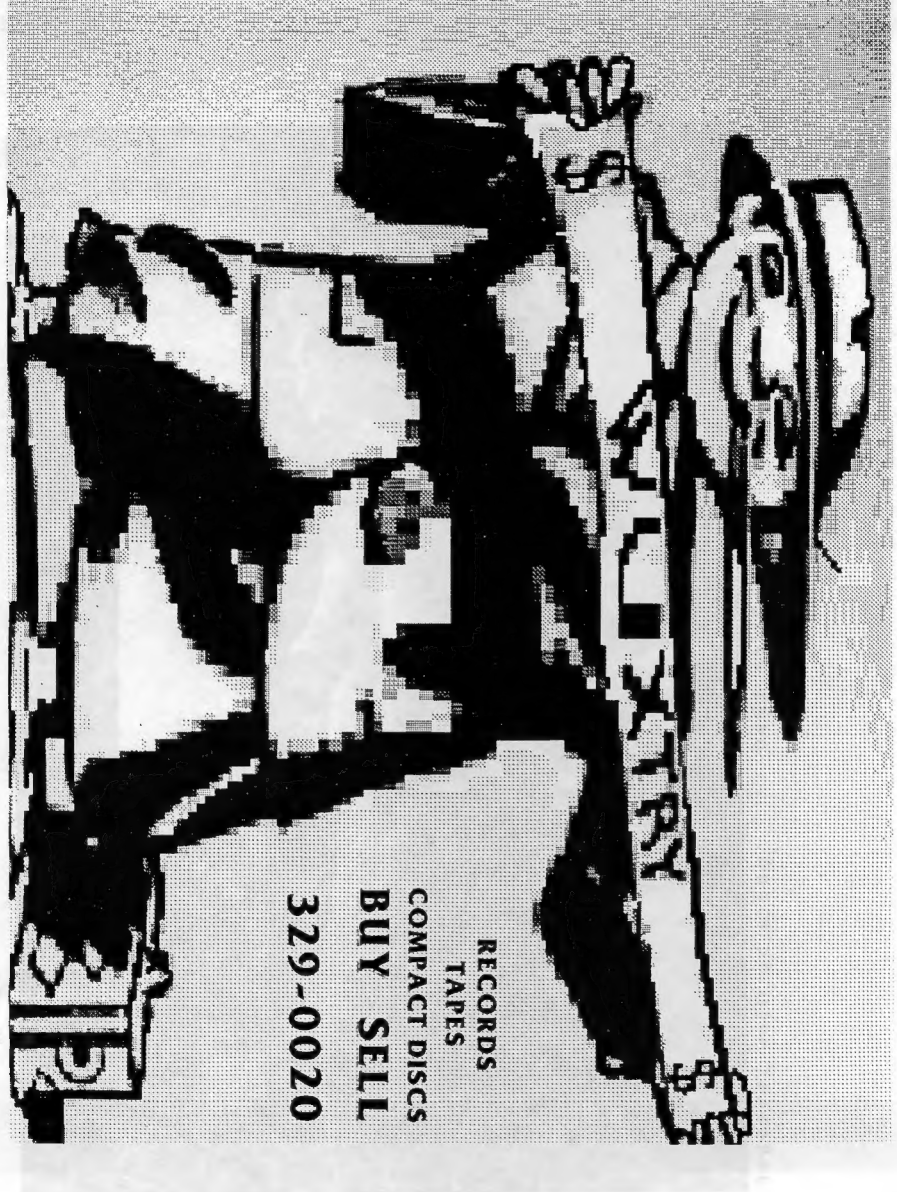
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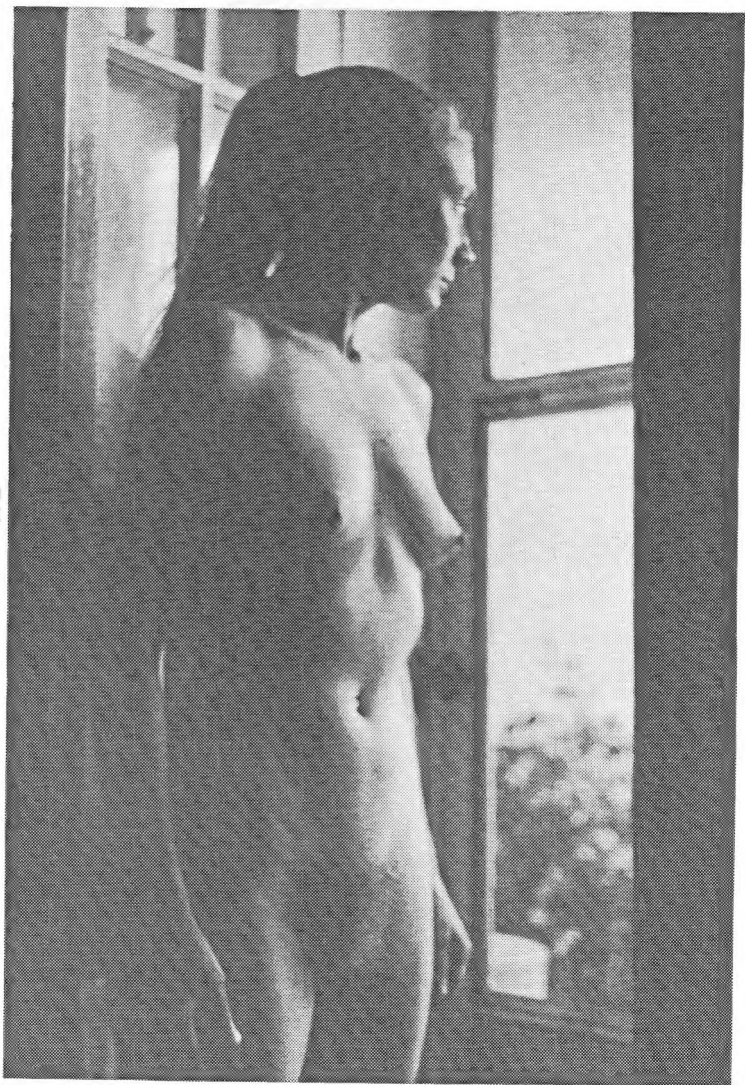
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Chicago, IL, 60680

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POB 271  
Sportswood, NJ, 08884

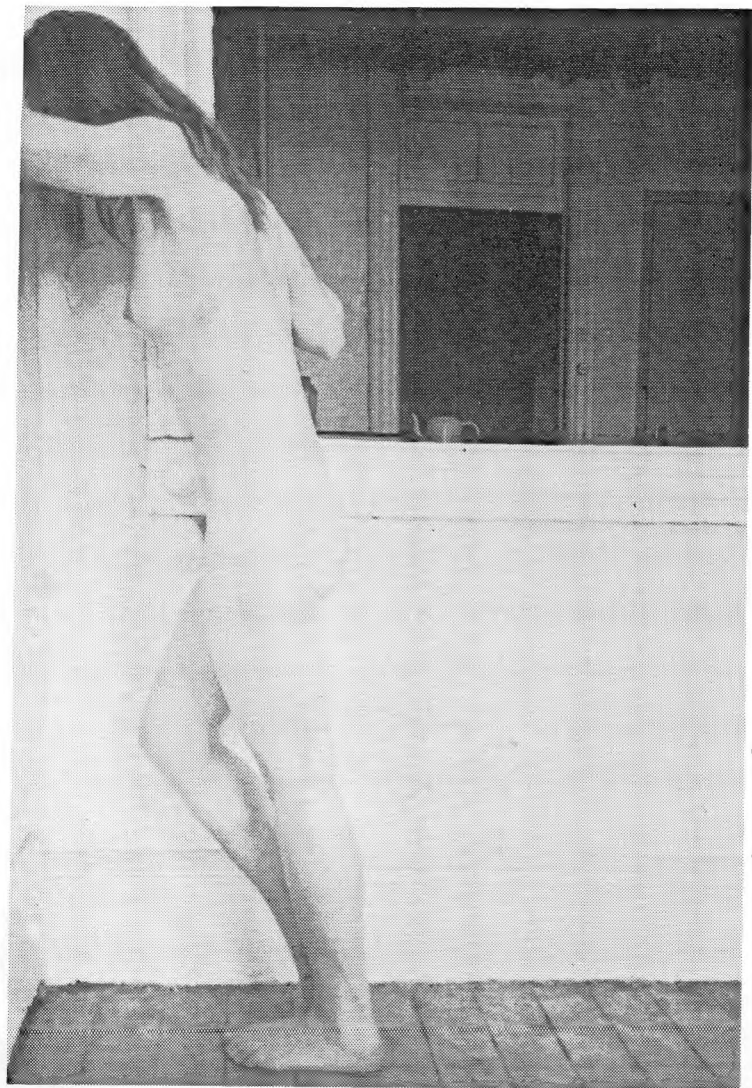


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Ellen 1990

photo by Glen Thrasher



Ellen 1988

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1

ARE WE SUPPOSED  
TO GO TOO?

WHAT  
ABOUT  
ME?

I AM.  
NOT SURE  
ABOUT  
YOU.

2

WHAT  
ABOUT  
US?

I HEAR  
IT'S JUST  
FOR LARGE  
MAMMALS

3

EVERY STATE  
EXECUTION CHAMBER

EAT SHIT  
WHITE BOY!

4

HE ALWAYS  
LEAVE  
ME  
HANGING!

SCENES FROM THE RAPTURE